

**JAMES JACKSON**

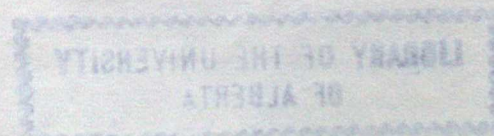
**U.S. NEGROES IN BATTLE:  
FROM LITTLE ROCK TO WATTS**

(A DIARY OF EVENTS—1957-1965)



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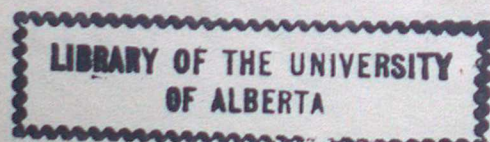




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НЕГРЫ США В БОРЬБЕ

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## INTRODUCTION

Interest in the long-sustained struggle of the American Negroes for freedom and justice is universal. In recent years this struggle has dominated the domestic scene in the United States. The militant upsurge of the Negro freedom movement has drawn into the arena of social and political action broad strata of the population for concerted struggle against the racist segregation and discrimination system. The impact of the Negro freedom movement has stirred all the forces of social progress in the U.S. to new life in the struggle for the advancement of democracy, economic well-being, for turning the policy of the Government in foreign affairs toward peace, and for the renunciation of its aggression in Vietnam and military operations elsewhere abroad.

The struggles of the U.S. Negroes are admired and supported by the foes of tyranny and oppression in every country. It is recognized by freedom-loving peoples the world over, that the freedom movement of the American Negro people is objectively part of the national-democratic revolution against colonialism and neo-colonialism which the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America are waging against imperialism with the support and solidarity of all progressives and working people, and the socialist nations.

A sector of the world front against colonialism and imperialism, the Negro freedom movement has a special, unique importance because it is that part of the anti-colonial front that lies within the very inner chambers of the citadel of world imperialism—the United States of America. This circumstance means that the Negro people's movement for equal democratic rights, for freedom, develops not in isolation from but in most intimate associa-



tion with all the political events and social forces at play in the general life of the nation as a whole. The repercussions of the militant and dramatic mass actions of the Negro freedom fighters are immediately registered in the major economic and political areas of national affairs.

Furthermore, the U.S. Negro people's democratic struggle is waged in closest association with the working-class struggle. Negroes are largely a proletarian people and constitute an important percentage of the total working class of the country. Therefore the Negro democratic struggle is not merely *allied to* but increasingly tends to merge with, combine with, the general *class* struggle. Conducting the struggle in the face of the massive military and police power of the foe, the Negro freedom movement has been compelled to pursue inventive and imaginative forms of conducting the mass struggle. The sit-ins, stand-ins, lie-ins; the 250,000-strong "marches" and street mobilizations; the spiritual songs of protest; the mass action non-violent resistance; the armed self-defence patrols of the "Deacons"<sup>1</sup>—all of these forms and more have fashioned viable tactics of struggle even when the odds were overpowering.

The chapters of this book relate the story of the progression of the Negro people's militant upsurge in terms of a number of battles along the freedom road from Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957, to Watts of Los Angeles, California, in 1965. Each account and analysis was written contemporary with the event as an appeal for action from the reader.

Taken altogether, I believe that the sequel of events presented and analysed here provides some feeling for, and insight into the continuing struggle of the Negro Americans for full equality, justice, dignity and freedom; a struggle, the very waging of which, not to speak of its victorious outcome, makes a most profound contribution to the attainment of democracy in America, to the defeat of colonialism and imperialism, and to the eradication of racism and chauvinism the world over.

James E. Jackson

<sup>1</sup> "Deacons of Defence and Justice"—armed Negro defence groups formed in southern cities where racist terror is most severe.—Ed.

## 1. THE MOST OPPRESSED AMERICANS

One in every 10 Americans is a Negro. But the values which Negroes have added to the wealth of the nation is far in excess of their one-tenth proportion in the population.

For 300 years as bondsmen and some 100 years as free-men, under slaver's whip and Jim Crow law,<sup>1</sup> Negro Americans have yielded up their labor and expended their lives for the up-building of this country in yet uncalculated measure.

Labor being the source and measure of all value, the riches of this nation have been compounded more of the blood, sweat and unrequited toil of Negroes than of any other of her citizenry.

No section of this nation has more claim on America by virtue of such an investment in her creation and development than her Negro citizens. And no sector of her people has been rewarded so meanly.

In his Civil Rights Message to Congress (February 28, 1963) President Kennedy depicted the continued oppression of Negro Americans in the following passage:

"The Negro baby born in America—regardless of the section or state in which he is born—has about one-half as much chance of completing high school as a white baby born in the same place on the same day; one-third as much chance of completing college; one-third as much chance of becoming a professional man; twice as much chance of becoming unemployed; about one-seventh as much chance of earning \$10,000 a year; a life expectancy

<sup>1</sup> Racist and anti-Negro laws.—Ed.



which is seven years less; and the prospects of earning only half as much."

Equality of citizenship rights without discrimination in political affairs, economic opportunity, cultural life and social status remain rights deferred for the vast majority of Negro Americans. They remain still the golden dream of their heart's desire and the urgent objectives of their ever more united and militant freedom struggle.

The history of our country has a rich strain of democratic lore, humanist ideals and stirring popular upsurges against injustice. At the very heart of this great inspirational heritage coursing like a mighty river throughout our nation's history, lies the epic struggle of the Negro people for freedom from bondage then, and for freedom from all the fetters of segregation and discrimination now.

Indeed, to know the history of America is to know the history of the Negro people. To know the meaning of America and to understand the basis for the fulfilment of its dream, is to share the burdens and battles of its Negro sons and daughters to make it really free.

Many Negro Americans are to be counted in the galaxy of distinguished Americans whose work have illuminated the pathways of the nation's progress.

Today the Negro people are militantly engaged on a wide front of struggles to secure their rights. The measure of the power of their struggles is seen, on the one hand, in the fury of the counter-attacks of the Mississippi and Alabama racists and assorted reactionaries.

But, on the other hand, the effectiveness of their militant mass actions is recorded in significant concessions wrung from the courts, from the Administration,<sup>1</sup> and certain real defeats suffered by the Dixiecrat racists.<sup>2</sup>

At no time since the Civil War have the times been so opportune for a general victory in the struggle for Negro rights. For we live in an age in which every wind brings news of new victories of the oppressed peoples over their oppressors. Already a third of mankind, one thousand million people, have shaken off the chains of economic slavery and are marching along the road of socialism.

<sup>1</sup> The U.S. Federal Government.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> Southern racists.—Ed.

The powerful growth of the Soviet Union and the whole socialist world—which knows no racism or exploitation of any kind—has shifted the balance of forces on a world scale to the side of all peoples struggling to free themselves from social and national and adverse-caste oppression. The imperialist perpetrators of colonialism and the monopolists who enrich themselves through the maintenance of the Jim Crow racist system in our own country no longer have the power to decide the pace of history, no longer have the strength to prevent the crumbling of their rotten system of racist persecution and economic robbery.

In just 3 years over fifty new states were born at the expense of the colonial regimes. Already in the past few years some 800 million people have acquired their independence from the imperialist overlords.

And in our own country victory over the Jim Crow system of discrimination and segregation of the Negro people can be won in these days.

What is required is to continue the ever-rising tempo of militant mass actions of the Negro people.

What is required is ever closer bonds of unity among the Negro popular leaders and a clear recognition of the fact that the principal device of divisionism being wielded against that necessary unity is the prejudice and fear caused by the hysteria of "anti-Communism".

What is required is the awakening of a new spirit of "Abolitionism"<sup>1</sup> among the trade unionists and the broadest strata of the white population to match the militancy of the Negro masses. It calls for solidarity actions in behalf of the just demands of the Negro people to advance common interests.

What is required is concerted militant mass action directed in the first instance to the Government, with the demand that the President issue immediately appropriate EXECUTIVE ORDERS to enforce the outlawing of discrimination against Negro citizens in the exercise of their voting and political action rights; in defence of equal jobs, housing, educational and cultural rights.

The Negro people, on their part, will increasingly relate

<sup>1</sup> Anti-racial, anti-discrimination spirit. Abolitionism was a broad movement in the U.S. in the 19th century against slavery.—Ed.



and combine their special struggle for civil rights with the equally vital general struggle for the abolition of colonialism in the world, for active friendship with the anti-colonial countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America and of the socialist world.

The Negro people will stand with the vast majority of Americans who are joining ever more actively in the struggle for world peace. They are demanding the redirection of the vast sums now being spent on armaments toward programs for wiping out the inequalities in housing, employment, education, health care of the world's underprivileged masses—including the Negro people of the United States.

Over a hundred years ago the great abolitionist Frederick Douglass<sup>1</sup> wrote that:

"When a great truth once gets abroad in the world, no power on earth can imprison it, or prescribe its limits, or suppress it."

The "great truth" which Douglass was occupied with then was that man should be as a brother to man; that every man should be bondsman to another; that the natural function of the oppressed is that of waging ceaseless struggle against the oppressor; that to attain the estate of freedom is the common destiny of man.

As it was in America then, so it is now, throughout our globe, repressed man under the banner of the irrepressible Great Truth advances to his goal through earnest struggle. Frederick Douglass, as the foremost herald, tribune and organizer of the struggle against the institution of human slavery in the United States, by the same token set a cadence call for the struggle against exploitation on the part of the working class of Negro and white toilers.

"No class of men can, without insulting their own nature, be content with any deprivation of their rights," he said. Douglass held that a major object of northern capitalists' tolerance of slavery in the South was that they saw in the slave system the ultimate way of insuring "perfect control of its laborers".

<sup>1</sup> Frederick Douglass (1817-1895)—the most outstanding leader of American Negroes and a prominent political figure in the U.S. in the 19th century. A Negro and a former slave himself, he was an ardent abolitionist, a brilliant orator and publicist.—Ed.

Indeed, to this very day, the most reactionary sector of big business interests doggedly pursue their age-old design to secure laws and court rulings to put the trade unions and "free labor" in new shackles for effecting a more "perfect control of their laborers", the better to rob and exploit them.

As Frederick Douglass saw, and Karl Marx wrote, a hundred years ago, that slavery in a part of the Republic would paralyze every independent movement of the workers; so today, the system of segregation and the practices of discrimination against Negro Americans—95 per cent of whom are working people—serves only the interests of those who are again striving to bind all workers to the profiteers' chariot with new chains of repressive anti-labor laws.

A hundred years ago, a young mainly white labor movement still in its swaddling clothes, measured the appeals of Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass and Karl Marx against the reality of their own self-interest and class aspirations, and found that they rang true. "Labor in a white skin can never be free, so long as labor in a black skin is branded."

The light of this truth cut through the veil of old prejudices, and the fledgling labor movement of the mid 19th century took up the banner of struggle for Negro freedom as the most direct path to its own emancipation.

Once again, the call resounds for the freedom advance, the age is such that it can lead to the final call; but to attain the high ground for the emancipation of all labor, the trade union movement must take the path of struggle to secure the full and unqualified rights of their Negro brothers. This line of march is no detour. It is the only road to victory of the working class in our country.

To secure now the final measure of the denied rights of the Negro people, is to advance the rights of all working people, is to strike a strategic blow against the common exploiter class, is to open the way toward a fundamental transformation of the social order in the interests of the working masses.

The challenge to all Americans is to swell the active struggle to secure to the Negro people equality of rights in all aspects of the political, economic, social and cultural life of the nation; to swell it to a crusade that will level



all the barriers of Jim Crow racism, segregation and discrimination, that will result in the enactment of the necessary laws and enforcement of the existing Constitutional privileges to secure the ballot to the Negroes of the South and full respect for their equality and dignity everywhere in the nation, in all avenues of social endeavor.

The workers of our country bear in their necessity the social design for our nation's future, and in their ever more conscious unity and political action, the primary power for its fulfilment.

They above all must act to smash the last color bars that stand against their unity. They above all must rally to the struggle for the rights of the Negro people: that the nation may advance to a new plane of struggle, for the maximum satisfaction of the unbounded aspirations of all for peace, brotherhood, happiness and cultural attainment secured upon a foundation of realized economic abundance.

The struggle to put an end to all racial proscriptions which deprive the Negro people of their rightful place as equals within the family of the American nation is of itself a vital force for the democratic renewal of our nation; at the same time it is a struggle to secure to the Negro people the means to fully join in the political struggle to bring about the needed fundamental social reformation of our society. The ends of Negro freedom are served also through the struggles to secure the general social needs of the nation. While struggling to secure their just status in the nation, the Negro people bring strength to and bind allies to their struggle through participation in all people's struggles in the true interest of the nation as a whole.

Even as a fugitive slave, Frederick Douglass had a profound understanding of how the cause of a particular freedom is served by a participating regard for the freedom needs of the nation and of all mankind in general. He wrote "though I am more closely connected and identified with one class of outraged oppressed and enslaved people, I cannot allow myself to be insensible to the wrongs and sufferings of any part of the great family of man. I am not only an American slave, but a man and as such, am bound to use my powers for the welfare of the whole human brotherhood."

And in the national interest, confronting Negro Americans as all citizens, is the question of questions: how to prevent the outbreak of the ever-threatening danger of thermonuclear war. Freedom for the Negro people no less than life for man requires the active partisanship in the battle for peace today of all who cherish a brighter tomorrow.

Shortly before joining the Communist Party at the age of 93, a commitment of historic importance, which Gus Hall<sup>1</sup> characterized as "the crowning logic of a noble life wholly devoted to the people's struggle for freedom, well-being, peace, and culture", W. E. B. DuBois<sup>2</sup> had written that "the United States Government is increasing military expenditures and the national debt in order to make the rich richer and the poor poorer. We know the cause of this: the arms drive and war are in the interest of a tight fistful of rich business concerns who want to contain socialism and prevent the triumph of Communism. Of course that aim is impossible. Socialism progresses and will progress... the ideals of Communism will triumph."

Indeed it is in the insane intrigues of the politicians and military agents of the ultra-Right who represent that sector of the monopolists, "that tight fistful of rich business interests", who are endangering the life of our country and menacing the world.

Not only are they preventing the restoration of peace and normal relations with the Cuban Government but they are pushing policies on the administration designed to fan the flames of conflict in Vietnam as well as in the tinder box of Europe—West Berlin.

Neither the world's people nor our own have forgotten the days of agony preceding October 22nd of 1962, when the people of our country like those of the Soviet Union contemplated their confrontation with the imminent danger of the thermonuclear war. The recall of that should

<sup>1</sup> Gus Hall—national spokesman for the U.S. Communist Party.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> William Edmore Burghardt DuBois (1868-1963)—a noted scholar, a distinguished Negro historian and a militant fighter against racism and white chauvinism, against militarism and war. He was the founder of Negro literature in the U.S. In his works he depicted the active role of the Negro people in the Civil War and during the Reconstruction period (1865-77), as well as their great contribution to the American economy, history and culture.—Ed.



serve to stir all the peace forces of our country to intensify all activities to forestall the dastardly design of the reactionaries in our country to impose their will over the foreign policy of the country. The influence peddlers of policies of new aggressive military adventures in Washington must be forcefully countered by renewed massive demands on the part of all peace forces, of labor, of the Negro people whose interests are one in the cause of the preservation of peace.

Not a renewal of the crisis in the Caribbean, but new positive steps toward the conclusion of an agreement with the Soviet Union to ban all further nuclear tests.

Not the sending of more men and armaments to Vietnam, but the exercise of a bold initiative to relieve war tensions by withdrawal of our armed forces abroad and the dismantling of all such aggressive outposts based on foreign soil.

Great needs of long deprived millions of people could be satisfied abundantly and speedily out of the labor and science values reclaimed for humanity that now go into the waste of arms-making and taxpayers' impoverishment.

What DuBois wrote of the price of liberty some 60 years ago applies equally well to the cost of disarmament today.

"It will cost something," he said, "but it will not cost as much as waiting."

The cost of the cold war and the armament race "ever tends to increase the danger point of war" itself.

The militant and sustained voice of the people raised throughout our land cannot for long be ignored in Washington; new policies for new times and needs are required—policies to replace cold war with relations of peaceful coexistence, to replace the arms race with progressive measures toward universal and general disarmament.

We, mankind, have entered upon an epoch in which the fondest hopes and most wishful dreams of all who through the ages aspired to, can and will be realized.

Ours is an age in which peace can be secured, freedom and brotherhood realized, and the material and cultural satisfaction of our needs fulfilled. But the forces who would deny us the fruits of this age will concede nothing without a demand for it, without our struggle for it. The cost of peace and freedom is counted in the unity and intensity of the struggles of the people.

October 1957

## 2. CHILDREN CHALLENGE BAYONETS AT LITTLE ROCK

On the morning of September 9, 1957, the Governor of Arkansas, Orval E. Faubus, commandeered a unit of the National Guard,<sup>1</sup> equipped with full field regalia and combat armament, and directed it to form battle stations around Little Rock's Central High School. They had orders to use all military means to "place the school off limits" to nine Negro students who had been designated to enroll there by the Board of Education in token compliance with a Federal Court order issued in conformity with the 1954 school desegregation ruling of the U.S. Supreme Court. When he took this indefensible action, he set in motion a chain of events and activated social forces whose ultimate consequences can only result in defeat for the power position of Southern racism in the political and social life of the country.

Indelibly etched in the memories and on the conscience of the nation is the picture of a small, sweet-faced Negro teenager, Elizabeth Eckford, being menaced by the upraised rifles of six-foot soldiers blocking her way to the school steps while the hate-twisted faces of white hoodlums close in upon her from the rear. This scene and scores of similar ones occupied the front pages of the newspapers of our country and the world for days. Tens of millions of television and newsreel viewers received a visual report of the truth and consequences of American anti-Negro racism

<sup>1</sup> State troops under the command of the state governor. In case of emergency they may be federalized by the U.S. President.—Ed.



and prejudice which was a stunning and shocking study in unreasoning, anti-human bestiality and depravity. It was a revelation to most, an insight into the terrible depths to which the toleration of racism in our national life has carried many of our countrymen.

It was the occasion for soul-searching in many a white American family, in the home of many a white trade unionist, church-goer, school child, apartment dweller and businessman, and for taking stock of their own pattern of relationships with their Negro fellow citizens, shopmates and neighbors.

In counterpoint to the animal-like exhibitionism and brutal, cowardly conduct of the white supremacist mobs, the un-daunted and fearless Negro school children won the compassion, admiration and gratitude of all decent-minded people everywhere. They tested the barrier of the soldiers' bayonets with their youthful bodies; they walked the gauntlet of sadistic hate-fired mobs who spat upon them and stoned them and violated their ears with every verbal indecency. With heads erect, backs unbowed, fearless and unafraid, proud of their place of honor in the van of a whole people's iron-willed and determined march toward genuine freedom, the unfailing steps of the Negro youth have set a new pace for all those who struggle on the frontiers of social progress and a new and lofty standard of courage for its fighters to emulate.

\* \* \*

Why did the cabal of Dixiecrat politicians, the arrant racists and the calculating profiteers in prejudice choose Arkansas and Little Rock in particular to make a show of force against the forces of school desegregation and democratization in the South? Why did the segregationists make this the place and time to challenge the federal judicial and executive authority?

In more than a historic sense, time is running out for the bigots of Southern Bourbonry.

1. Changes have occurred in the economic base. The cities have taken over from the counties in terms of population. Industry has taken over from agriculture in terms of product value, employment, invested capital and

gains. Modern capitalist relations in agriculture have largely displaced the sharecropping plantation system. These changes have generated heavy objective pressures upon, and set in motion new forces against, the outdated, ultra-reactionary social patterns and political practices in the Southern states.

2. The Negro people's movement for civil rights and genuine freedom gains in strength. Encouraged by the minimal economic, educational and legal civil gains wrested in the war and post-war years, inspired by the world-changing victories secured by the revolting colonial millions of Asia and Africa, fortified by the occasional alliance and general sympathy of labor and liberal organizations, it has gained in membership, organization, unity, leadership, skill and militancy. Neither traditional KKK forays and police brutality, nor "new" terror tactics of economic sanctions, mass firings and foreclosures, nor outlawing and mass arrests of leaders have succeeded in interrupting its growth or corrupting its firm principles. The Negro people's movement has mounted successive South-wide struggles in the form of the Montgomery and other bus boycotts, against segregation in public transportation and in the form of numerous actions of students to seek enrollment in former all-white schools (Little Rock, Nashville, Charleston, Arlington, Birmingham, etc.). It has announced plans for a South-wide crusade to compel the registration of five million Negro voters by 1960. This new phase of the Negro Freedom Movement shows no indication of succumbing to the terror unleashed against it by Southern reaction.

3. Neither the outrages perpetrated by the KKK and White Citizens Councils,<sup>1</sup> nor the threats of nullification emanating from the Southern Governors' Conference, nor the Manifesto of the 100 Southern Congressmen for resistance "by all available legal means" to the Supreme Court's desegregation ruling of 1954, have caused the Federal Courts seriously to depart from their pattern of favorable rulings and orders for local school boards to proceed "with

<sup>1</sup> Racist, anti-Negro organizations in the South, established in 1954 after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation in public schools is unconstitutional. Their aim is to fight desegregation and to retain Negro discrimination generally.—Ed.



deliberate speed" to the lowering of the color bar in the public school system.

4. Weak shield though it was the civil rights (right-to-vote) law that was enacted in 1957 was viewed by the Southern governing class as a major clear and present danger to their unchallenged oligarchical rule. If vigorously and promptly enforced by the Courts and broadly used by the Negro masses, it could facilitate the fierce struggle of the disfranchised to secure the right to vote.

5. Recent developments in Arkansas suggested a disposition on the part of a considerable section of public opinion to accept the changes in the pattern of segregation as projected by the Supreme Court under the impact of the Negro people's long and militant struggle. Many local official personages like Mayor Woodrow W. Mann of Little Rock, Editor Ashford of the Arkansas Gazette, and former Governor Mahan openly began to identify themselves with the new enlightened sentiment among Southern whites in striving toward a new relationship with the Negro people on the basis of respect for their citizenship rights. Little Rock had peacefully complied with desegregation of the buses and the state college, more than any other Deep Southern state. Arkansas gave promise of becoming the first breach in the ranks of the "solid core" of resistor states to the tides of desegregation and democratization.

\* \* \*

It is for these reasons primarily (though the list is not exhaustive of all the factors at play) that the chief conspirators of the nullification forces of unregenerate Southern reaction chose Arkansas. They calculated that if Arkansas, which had evidenced some progress and disposition to take halting steps toward removing certain rails of the color bar, could be made the scene of white supremacist demonstrations, with the gun play of National Guardsmen restoring "law and order" at the command of the erstwhile Southern style pseudo-liberal Governor Faubus, then the Government would adjudge the Southern viewpoints as unitedly opposed to desegregation and would act to curb further enforcement of the school desegregation ruling. This would signalize its intention not to prosecute with any vigor the newly enacted Civil Rights Law.

In brief, Dixiedom made a bold effort to break down the forces of slow progress towards desegregation and democratization which are investing her and opening revolts throughout her realm. "Little Rock" was designed to strike terror into the hearts of Southern Negroes and stampede their white supporters there. By a massive dramatized display of terror, it sought to compel the Government to retreat from performing its responsibility to enforce school desegregation. It was as a flaming-cross warning to the Courts and the Government not to proceed to the enforcement of the new Civil Rights Law. It was perpetrated to high-jack new "states right" prerogatives at the expense of the Federal Government's authority to safeguard the Negro people in the exercise of their Constitutional rights.

The desperate offensive of the white supremacy forces at Little Rock won certain short-term advantages for the segregationists. By arraying armed force of the State National Guard against the Negro students, Governor Faubus emboldened every gang of Negro-hating racist misanthropes in the country. A few hundred of the dregs of Nashville's (Tennessee) white community were stirred by racist propaganda into hysterical abuse of six-year-old Negro first-grade tots, and this was climaxed in the dynamiting of a new half-million dollar school which had admitted one Negro tot the previous day. In Birmingham, Alabama, the venerated Negro militant, Rev. Shuttlesworth, was flogged with chains and brass knuckles when he sought to convoy some children to the white neighborhood school. In nearby Marion, an innocent Negro veteran was fiendishly emasculated with a razor blade as an initiation test by a leadership candidate for a local KKK group. In Charlotte, North Carolina, 15-year-old Dorothy Counts was made the target of spittle and brick bats from her schoolmates as she went to and from a formerly white school until a cut in the head forced her to abandon the unequal fight. Still the mob-makers could rally but a few thousands to counter the unwavering forward march of eleven million Southern Negroes determined to have their rights now though mobs stone their children, draw their blood, and dynamite their homes and churches.

\* \* \*



But what Gov. Faubus and his "interposition and nullification" conspirators banked their hopes on most of all was the demonstrated unwillingness of the Eisenhower Administration to invoke the executive powers of the Government to firmly back up the Court's rulings. In this they were not disappointed. Throughout this critical struggle, Eisenhower voiced no words of comfort to the school children victims of the mob's fury. Neither did he utter a single reproach to the Arkansas Governor whose action had triggered a chain of acts of racist infamy at numerous points in the South. Through his press secretary he found only irrelevant inanities about "caution and patience" to address to the Negro victims while comforting the Arkansas Governor by "recognizing that responsibility rests with the Governor to preserve law and order in his state".

Taking his cue from the President, Attorney General Brownell dragged his feet in bringing Faubus to trial for defying with force and threats of violence the execution of Federal Court orders to withdraw the National Guard from the school. J. Edgar Hoover, FBI chieftain, also rushed into print to denounce those who entertain any hopes that FBI men would be used to provide protection for Negro school kids in the exercise of their Constitutional rights.

Indeed Eisenhower bears a major responsibility for the infamous outrages in the South. As an editorial in the September 14, 1957, *People's World* declared: "... The Eisenhower Administration is responsible. Its weasel-worded hesitations and indecisions since the Supreme Court's desegregation ruling of May 17, 1954, have emboldened the terrorists, the dynamiters, the instigators of mob violence."

\* \* \*

What conclusions are to be drawn from Little Rock?

The first revelation of Little Rock is that the Negro people shall not be moved from their determination to gain their total rights as free-born Americans, come what may. So resolute is their will, so all-pervading is their confidence of victory that they have not hesitated to commit their six-year-old toddlers and the flower of their youth to the struggle. To their noble resolve they have matched

glorious deeds of selfless sacrifice and heroism. Undiscouraged by the indifference of governmental leaders, undaunted by the poverty of successes thus far realized, uncowed by the frenzy of the mobs and defamations of the white supremacists, the flambeau of the Negro people's struggle for equality and freedom blazes ever brighter against the long night of Southern tyranny.

Little Rock revealed that growing numbers of white Southerners are casting off their heavy veil of racial bigotry and unreasoning prejudices. Never before have so many white Southerners, albeit timidly and uncertainly, dissociated their voices from those of the mob where the rights of Negroes were concerned. The mass of white Southerners were silent in their sympathies but they did not rally to the call of the wild unreason of the professional Negro-haters. Not all white Southerners limited their support to the Negroes' just struggles by mere abstinence from the assault on them. More of them spoke up against the depredations of the segregationists than ever before. They included the Mayor of Little Rock, the Governor of Tennessee, a Federal Judge and numerous clergymen and teachers. But the white Southerner whose supporting role was in the measure equal to the challenge of the situation, to the quality of aid required, was Little Rock's courageous Mrs. Grace Lorch. It was she who broke through the mob to take her stand beside the 15-year-old Elizabeth Eckford, to envelop her in her arms in demonstrative defiance of the white supremacists, and arm in arm to share the remainder of her walk through the gauntlet. Mrs. Lorch's deed previewed the coming of the second Southern emancipation—that is, of the white Southerner from the blindfold of his racial prejudice.

Little Rock made vivid to the nation what every thoughtful person suspected: that the Negro's freedom cause is one with democracy's survival. That the democratic rights of the people as a whole remain restricted and insecure as long as they are denied to the Negro people. That the means required to hold the Negro in an oppressed status constitute a threat to constitutional government itself.

In response to the challenge of Little Rock, there issued forth from all corners of the nation a veritable avalanche of letters to newspapers from people in all stations of life.



There appeared unprecedented editorial expressions of revulsion, shame and outrage at Faubus' foul blow, as well as whole-hearted sympathy for his child victims and their people's cause, reflecting the sentiments of millions.

As a consequence of Little Rock a qualitatively new and favorable climate has emerged in the country for mounting even bolder initiative toward speeding the advance of the Negro people to full freedom from discrimination and segregation.

But if the contest at Little Rock and the reaction to Little Rock have awakened new and powerful forces to the cause of the struggle for Negro rights, the very fact that Little Rock did occur reveals the terrible depths of the wounds of anti-Negro racism that bleed our national life.

\* \* \*

The trade union movement—the Negro people's strategic ally in the freedom struggle—has not adequately measured up to its responsibility in the Little Rock crisis. This is not to say that nothing has happened. There have been numerous indignant statements from national labor leaders, and sharply worded resolutions have been issued by a number of non-Southern trade union bodies.

Outstanding among these was the action of the California State Federation of Labor, at whose convention more than 2,000 delegates unanimously approved a resolution strongly suggesting President Eisenhower's impeachment if he failed to uphold the Constitution in Little Rock. The resolution further called on Congress "to prohibit any public official from thwarting national law and undermining federal authority".

Such actions are of great importance and call for the widest emulation. But by themselves they are inadequate. Can mobs and misled uniformed men with submachine guns and bayonets be countered only with resolutions? A number of concrete steps could and should have been taken at that time in defence of the national interests and to further strengthen the bonds of alliance with the Negro people.

Those Southern states which defy the Federal Government and courts by nullifying the Constitution in respect

to the citizenship rights of the Negro people, are the lead states in violating the rights of labor, the open-shop havens of the infamous union-busting "right-to-work" laws.<sup>1</sup>

The clear challenge of Little Rock to the trade union movement is to get on with its too-often-shelved drive to organize the millions of unorganized Southern workers in the plants and on the plantations. The cause of democracy and desegregation in the South will make swifter progress when the front of struggle of the Negro people is supported by the opening of a second front of social struggle by the labor movement. A requisite for success is that the labor movement must militantly struggle against the sadistic and divisive influence of the White Citizens Councils and the revived KKK, and abide by the cardinal organizational class principle of non-discrimination and Negro and white workers' unity.

The challenge of Little Rock obligates the trade unions to resolutely level all those remaining discriminatory barriers of the color bar in the job market, in upgrading and promotion practices, in job and apprenticeship training programs, and in the inner-life and leadership of the unions themselves. Labor must intervene on a more massive and sustained scale in the all-sided struggles of the Negro people for equality and against Jim Crow—in the community and before the legislative chambers, as well as on the job front.

The fight against segregation in housing in the North is the companion issue to the fight to desegregate the schools in the South in the democratic struggle for Negro freedom. In this hard-fought social struggle the trade unions must everywhere be helped to display initiative and render practical aid toward securing a swift and victorious outcome.

The consequences of Little Rock in particular, and the course of the civil rights struggle in general, will influence profoundly the political attitudes, alliances and outlook of all the Negro and many millions of white voters in the period immediately ahead.

Labor and the popular forces must render every mate-

<sup>1</sup> The so-called "right-to-work" laws are anti-union laws existing in 19 states. They forbid the inclusion in the collective bargaining agreements of provisions making union membership a prerequisite for hiring thereby enabling the employers to hire non-union labor.—Ed.



rial aid to the newly launched crusade of the Southern Negroes to secure to themselves the tools of effective political action—the right to vote and to stand for election.

The response to Little Rock has signalized that ours is a time ripe with opportunity to secure major victories in the cause of Negro freedom. Such victories will help rout anti-Negro racism from our national life, thereby creating the conditions and arraying the allied forces for opening wide the doors to great new initiatives of struggle to advance, under the leadership of the working class, along the whole social frontier.

### 3. RACIST OUTRAGES CONTINUE. NEW THRUSTS FOR FREEDOM

May 28, 1961

#### Freedom Rides

Alabama mud, red with the blood of our youth, has been spattered in the eye of the nation by the State Governor John Patterson and his Ku Klux mobsters.

Heroic Negro youth, with courageous young white men and women by their side, are gloriously pushing the point of the developing general offensive of the Negro people and their white allies against the Southern segregation system with all of its barbarous dignity-destroying and life-destroying patterns of racist tyranny, unconscionable exploitation and human misery.

The fury of the mob reaction against those youths in Alabama, which was promoted by the Governor of Alabama himself, is the measure of the failure of President Kennedy, as of his predecessors, to use the powers of his office to secure to the Negro masses in the South their court-ordered and federal law-given rights of equality. The dispatch of a contingent of U.S. marshals to Montgomery was a welcome but lusterless performance. A week of mob-rule terror followed, after the flesh-gouging and bone-crushing beatings suffered by James Peck and the CORE<sup>1</sup> Freedom Riders<sup>2</sup> in Anniston in May 1961, before Attorney General

<sup>1</sup> Congress of Racial Equality—one of the leading organizations in the U.S. Negro freedom struggle. It was formed in 1943, but came to the forefront during the Negro sit-in movement in the South in 1960.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> Those who participated in the "Freedom Rides" movement for desegregation in inter-state bus transportation in the South in 1961-62.—Ed.



Robert Kennedy was finally moved to send U.S. marshals to stave off a threatened massacre of a church gathering of hundreds of Negroes joined by a number of white students protesting the continuing violation of their rights to unsegregated travel and bus terminal service.

How outrageous is the condition that prevails in our country! We behold a government boastful of its mighty powers, that flexes its military muscles and shouts in threatening tones before the world that it would order the lives of sovereign nations, from Cuba to Vietnam, yet has failed to secure the rights and defend the liberties of 20 million of its Negro citizens, 98 years after those rights were proclaimed. How fraudulent and mocking do the Government's "democratic free world" pretensions sound to world public opinion!

All the democratic-minded and justice-loving people of our nation owe a special debt of gratitude to these glorious young crusaders for our Government's lost principles, for dramatizing the savage horror of the Southern way of life that is the commonplace daily reality of millions of Negro citizens. Especially so because the rights they were trying to exercise are rights which have long since been established by law, proclaimed by court decision and boasted about over the Voice of America.

They have revealed before the nation and the world that such elementary human and civil rights do not exist for the millions of Negroes in the South, and that to assert them is to risk life and limb. And, furthermore, that the Federal Government has taken no effective measures to secure and enforce compliance with Constitutional and human rights when the rights of the Negro people are concerned.

All decent-minded human beings must demand that the Administration, the government power of the U.S. must take up this burden now borne on the shoulders of our valiant youth, and by Presidential Executive Order and supplementary urgently-enacted civil rights laws accomplish the total eradication of the Southern states' Jim Crow laws and segregation system. And put into effect at once a federally-policed system of controlled compliance with, and defence of, the rights of the Negro citizens in the Southern states.

In their irredeemable ignorance of the reality of the people's power in this age in which we live, Gov. Faubus of Arkansas and Gov. Barnett of Mississippi, and the neo-Confederate states' clique in Congress have pledged all-out aid to the Governor of Alabama in his impudent defiance of the laws of the nation.

Not alone the rights of the Negro people, but the general welfare and interests of the nation demand that the battle at long last be joined and fought out, to the end that the insolent insurrectionary blackmailers of the nation, chieftains of white supremacy mobsters, and perpetrators of the criminal segregation system are totally crushed.

Let there be no truce in the offensive against the segregation system. Jim Crow must go NOW!

Let there be full support to the Freedom Riders and all those who summon the masses to large-scale direct actions to put an end once and for all to the lawless segregation system.

Let hundreds and thousands now join in the anti-segregation "ride-ins" throughout the South. Let the students, trade unionists and church people organize such Freedom-Ride excursions throughout the South.

Let Washington see the presence of delegations and hear the messages of thousands of freedom-loving Americans demanding the strongest and most immediate enforcement of the rights of the Negro people in the South, and for the severest measures against the insurrectionary Dixiecrat leaders and mobsters.

Let the state legislatures and city councils memorialize Congress and the President for the enactment of full programs for enforcing the civil rights of the Negro people.

Let the students hold protest holidays, and workers picket, and the people—Negro and white—rally in great meetings of solidarity with the Southern Freedom Riders and the just cause of the Negro people to secure their civil rights.

November 18, 1962

### **Violence at the Ole Miss Campus**

In a speech before a New Orleans rally of the White Citizens Council, a member of the Louisiana state legislature, one Wellborn Jack of Shreveport, boasted of his role



in leading a pillaging pack of white supremacy mobsters across state lines into Mississippi to swell the mob violence on the Ole Miss campus last October 27. This was the day a Negro youth James Meredith who sought admission to the State University was escorted onto the campus to register by a troop of Federal marshals.

The following day a lynch-bent mob staged a wild orgy of violence on the campus that caused the injury of scores and the death of two persons—one was a French correspondent who was shot in the back.

Not only did Rep. Wellborn Jack brag about his mission to incite the mob to deprive Meredith of his Constitutional rights in violation of Jack's oath of office, but he "announced" on Monday, approvingly, that he knew the identity of certain men in Mississippi who "are going to kill James Meredith" if he dares remain at the University.

On the record of Jack's own revelations, it now becomes mandatory that Attorney General Robert Kennedy take the necessary actions to bring this Wellborn racist monster to justice. Already he has violated federal law by journeying across state lines on a mission of mayhem against James Meredith in Mississippi. Furthermore, he is obstructing justice and occupies the role of party to a conspiracy to commit murder by not turning over to the law enforcement officials the names of the assigned would-be assassins of the heroic Jim Crow fighter, the Negro student, James Meredith.

May 5, 1963

### The Road He Trod

"John Brown's<sup>1</sup> body lies smouldering in his grave but his soul goes marching on." These were the words on the lips of Sherman's Army of liberation on its march to the sea through the vitals of the slavemasters' South. Their song, fitted in cadence to the beat of their marching feet, reverberated across the Southern skies.

<sup>1</sup> John Brown (1800-1859)—an ardent abolitionist; believed that Negro emancipation in the U.S. could be brought about through armed struggle and an armed Negro slave uprising. He was hanged in 1859 after an unsuccessful attempt to obtain arms from the arsenal at Harpers Ferry for this purpose.—Ed.

Countless numbers of unsung Negro martyrs have given up their lives in the unequal struggle against the torturers of their people during the long reign of the Dixiecrat Negrophobes, but the beginning of the end for them was signaled when a Southern-born white man, William L. Moore, elected to become a pilgrim of truth and revelation, to walk South among his compatriots, teaching of the equality of Negro and white and the inviolability of the dignity of all men, and to suffer death in the doing of that deed. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

The whole nation has been aroused by the purity of his motive and profound depth of his commitment to the cause of the eradication of the anti-Negro racist malignancy from the body of our nation. Scores of Negro and white youth are taking to his path of march. They are carrying his banners, which still bear the stains of his blood upon them, through Georgia, Alabama and into Mississippi, throughout the whole South in reverence to his memory.

In the pure light of such a "Profile of Courage" that William L. Moore has bequeathed the youth of our nation, the appeal of Attorney General Robert Kennedy to the Freedom Riders, marchers, protesters and fighters for a "moratorium" on the mass action struggles for the desegregation and democratization of the South appeared as an ugly shadow.

Mr. Kennedy misreads the mood and necessities of the times in respect to the fight for the full and unqualified citizenship, freedom and dignity of the Negro people. Not "moratorium" but new resolves, new dedication to the fulfillment of promises, and bold decisions are required to end this curse of anti-Negro segregation and discrimination everywhere in the nation.

Until the Kennedy administration fulfils its commitments to secure the full Constitutional liberties to the least advantaged of Southern Negroes, the task and duty of all of the Negro people, indeed of every American with a concern for his own liberties and elementary human feelings for his brothers, is to struggle without pause in ever more militant mass actions until the Jim Crow walls are tumbled down and our people are truly united in equally shared democracy and freedom.



March 29, 1964

### Justice Is a Mockery in Jacksonville

Last Saturday the Mayor of Jacksonville, Florida, took to the air-waves and TV to advise Negro citizens that he would not consent to Negroes exercising their right to protest their Jim-Crowed exclusion from places of public accommodations. He declared, in effect, that he was nullifying the First Amendment and other Constitutional rights of Negroes to demonstrate against the hateful segregation system of Jacksonville.

Taking their cue from the Mayor, shotgun and pistol-wielding racist thugs in automobiles began murderous forays into the Negro community. During one such "ride through", a Negro mother of 11 children was shot to death by a carload of white racist pogromists. The reaction of the Negro community to the murderous assaults of armed ruffians and gangs of local police and deputized mobsters has been one of valorous and militant defense of their lives and liberties.

They have unanimously denounced the Mayor's diktat that they cease their demonstrating for an end to the degrading segregation practices of the city authorities and the proprietors of public places.

Their brave young people have defended themselves against the armed hoodlums and the charges of the riot-gun carrying posse of police and firemen.

The situation in Jacksonville (not unlike a dozen other spots in the unregenerate segregationist South) attests to the fact that the police and city's officialdom have gone over to the position of the racist mobsters, that the deprivation, degradation and segregation of Negro citizens has become the policy and prime purpose of the local governmental authority.

Consequently, the Jacksonville situation demands an extraordinary response from the Federal authority; it calls for the Administration—the President and the Attorney General—to counterpose to the defiant city authorities the full power of the Federal Government; it calls for the Administration to establish a FEDERAL TRUSTEESHIP over Jacksonville until new free elections can be held in order

to safeguard the lives and liberties of its citizens from the abuse and misuse of power by the local officials and police.

The murderous events in Jacksonville challenge all to demand of Washington to act to establish justice and to safeguard the rights of the people to exercise their Constitutional freedoms. The Department of Justice must send Federal marshals in effective numbers and the President must stand ready to send Federal troops to uphold the Negro citizens' right to the exercise of their freedom in Jacksonville as elsewhere and anywhere throughout the South.

The justice-loving citizens of our nation, in all parts of the country, can also give an answer to the Jacksonville racists in part, by an outpouring of letters and telegrams and visitations to their Senators and the President demanding the end to the shameful filibuster and for the ready passage of the Civil Rights Bill without any weakening amendments.



#### 4. THE BATTLE OF BIRMINGHAM: THE TURNING POINT IN THE FREEDOM FIGHT

May 12, 1963

##### What They Are Fighting For

THERE a six-year-old Negro girl was slapped, choked and thrown head first into a police wagon already full of youth and adult victims of the most savage display of police barbarism since the reign of Hitler.

THERE the uniformed white "law-men" have kicked pregnant women in their stomachs; unleashed rabid "killer" dogs on school-aged girls and boys; clubbed crippled old men into the ground, bloodied and bruised scores by training water-cannon on them—the jets from the water hoses are so powerful that they rip the clothes off the victims while bruising the flesh like the blows of a hammer.

THERE 1,500 Negro men, women and children have been arrested and thrown into filthy jail cells where they are jammed in like cordwood without floor space to sit down.

THERE with a mass of heroism and courage the 80,000 Negroes of the Birmingham ghetto have taken the cause of the securing of their human dignity and Constitutional liberties into their own hands.

THEY demand the right to vote and political representation.

THEY demand a just share of jobs for their jobless, and bread and welfare for hungry ones.

THEY demand that the white supremacy signs and barriers be torn down in department stores, parks and places of residence.

THEY demand an end to the racially exclusive Jim Crow school system.

THEY demand respect for their human dignity, to be accorded all the rights and opportunities of all other free and equal American citizens.

Their struggle is not merely for themselves alone. It is a struggle in which all Americans who cherish our Constitution, who would make meaningful its democratic promise, are deeply concerned.

Police Commissioner "Bull" Connor and Birmingham's other officials who have set German police dogs upon Negro children to tear their flesh are prototypes of those mad men of the "Ultra Right" in the country who are conspiring to unleash the dogs of fascism upon our nation as a whole. Lest this happen in our cities from New York to San Francisco—

YOU must act and demand that the President act—to guarantee that the "Bull" Connors and the Birmingham Beaters shall be beaten, and the Negro people's cause be victorious; that the U.S. Constitution and the 1st Amendment be restored to the people of Birmingham and the right of the Negro people to freedom of assembly and petition, and to exercise their full rights of American citizenship be safeguarded; that the immediate release from prison of the victims of the police outrages be secured.

The challenge of Birmingham demands *action* from—every trade union, every church, every student body, every Peace Committee, everyone who feels for his fellow men.

Send wires and telegrams to President Kennedy and the Attorney General. Demand that your Congressmen and Senators speak out. Organize protest demonstrations in every community and solidarity delegations to Birmingham. Send money to help the freedom movement led by Rev. Martin Luther King.

May 14, 1963

#### Neither Bombs, Nor Beatings, Nor Bigots Can Stop the Freedom Upsurge in Dixie!

"We have come treading a path which our blood has watered. . . .

Rocky the road we have trod, Bitter the chastening rod. . . .

But we shall march on 'till victory is won."



Such words as these did the great Negro poet James Weldon Johnson write as he contemplated the agony of his people and the epic valor of their unending struggle for freedom in this land of their birth at the time of the 50th anniversary of the Emancipation.

Now in this 100th anniversary year of the Emancipation the full meaning of his tribute to this glorious Negro people, in battle to fulfil the democratic promise of our America in securing the dignity of their own humanity and equitable rights as citizens, bursts like a new sun to light up the dark places in the conscience of the whole nation.

The sequel of events which have followed in close order the desperate efforts of segregationist mad men and Ku Kluxers of Birmingham's lame-duck officials—Police Commissioner "Bull" Connor, Mayor Arthur Hanes and the infamous racist Governor of Alabama George C. Wallace—to nullify the historic first step toward the desegregation and democratization of Birmingham, which the Negro people won in last Friday's agreement after a prolonged and bitter struggle, are testimony to the fact that the Negro people's struggle in the South is ushering in a new birth of freedom and democracy in our country and there can be no turning back.

All patriots and friends of freedom join in support of the final determined action of the President in deploying Federal troops to quell the insurrectionary Alabama segregationist leaders and to safeguard the Constitutional liberties of Negro Americans there.

Gov. Wallace's stormtrooper-like State Police patrols, under command of the vicious Negro-hater and genocidal maniac Col. Al Lingo, have joined forces with Bull Connor's local police gunmen to cordon off the Negro community of 17 square blocks with a shoulder-to-shoulder picket line of armed white men bearing tear gas grenades, machine guns and carbines. Armored cars, police dogs, and high-pressure water "cannon" are also in position along the perimeter of the besieged community.

Every American in the nation has an obligation to the glorious Negro freedom fighters in Birmingham. The cause they uphold and the liberties they seek are imperative for the survival of our country.

Ever more abundant aid should be given to the Negro

people's struggle against segregation in the South and against discrimination throughout the nation!

Let the President, the Congressmen, the newspaper editors, the clergymen, the corporation and chain store heads with Southern branches, the leaders of the trade unions with Southern affiliates, be constantly alerted to their responsibilities to uphold the rights of Negro Americans in their freedom fight.

Call upon the President to draw the full lesson from the Battle of Birmingham and take the initiative and issue a sweeping EXECUTIVE ORDER to outlaw all racially restrictive state and local laws and practices which operate to deprive Negro Americans of their full rights of men and their Constitutional liberties.

In Birmingham, Nashville, Raleigh, Greenwood—throughout the South and the nation—where Negroes fight for their rights as free and equal citizens—they champion the cause of all Americans. Join them!

May 19, 1963

### A New Charter of Freedom

In this May of 1963, the Negro people of Birmingham are writing the opening sentences of a new Emancipation Proclamation.

When, in 1953, hundreds of delegates to the convention of the NAACP<sup>1</sup> vowed "Freedom in 1963", the faint-hearted and the scoffers laughed at the visionaries. When the Supreme Court, in 1954, as the result of struggle by the Negro people and their allies, declared school Jim Crow violated the Constitution, there were those who cynically dismissed this decision as impossible of fulfilment, and those who eagerly grasped at it as an excuse for halting all struggle.

But the Negro people, despite all odds, bravely carried on the struggle for Freedom Now. Thus it has come about inevitably that in May of this year the Negro people of Birmingham have been writing a new charter of freedom,

<sup>1</sup> National Association for the Advancement of Colored People—the largest and oldest (established in 1909) Negro organization, which is in the forefront of the U.S. Negro Freedom struggle.—Ed.



in the final drafting of which the entire nation will and must participate.

This is a charter of freedom not only for the Negro people of Birmingham with its strong and experienced working class, for the Negro people of the South or for that matter throughout the U.S., it is a charter for all the people of the nation, white and dark-skinned. For, with the breaking of the barriers in restaurants, public places, parks, the schools of Birmingham, the heartland of the white-supremacist violators of the law, the white people will also be freed of the shackles Jim Crow has forged around them—ignorance, exploitation, insecurity and degradation of their dignity.

And these barriers will surely be broken in Birmingham, despite the Ku Kluxers, the Bull Connors, the Governor Wallaces, or even the slowness of Washington to act. That agreement between the representatives of the Negro citizens of Birmingham and the leaders of the white citizens of that economic core of the South, providing for the wedges in Jim Crow, will be realized despite the whining and threatening of a rabid minority.

For the truth is that only a minority of white supremacists sought to bar any agreement between the Negro and white citizens of Birmingham on moves to end segregation. It was only the police of Bull Connor, trained like their dogs by the heirs of the slaveholders, and the dehumanized state police of Gov. George Wallace and Col. Albert J. Lingo, who barred the way of the Negro citizens and their families as they marched for their freedom. It was only the fragments of the Ku Klux Klan that sought to destroy that agreement by planting bombs and fomenting violence.

But the mass of white citizens of Birmingham, despite prejudices still held by many of them, refused to join these Hitler-like elements in criminal attacks on the Negro people. As a matter of fact, the leadership of the white people went over the heads of these agents of suppression and defied the Jim Crow laws of Birmingham and Alabama to come to an agreement with the Negro citizens.

Many of the white people of the South may still be infected with white supremacism, spread by tradition, law, church, school and newspaper. But the struggles of the Negro people in the last ten years have obviously taught

these white people that they will have to go along and live with the changes that will come with the end of Jim Crow. Eventually they will realize that this first victory of the Negro citizens of Birmingham was also a victory for them.

For there can be no denying that what happened in Birmingham is a magnificent victory. If there were ever any doubt of it, what has happened since should be proof. In Jackson, Miss., and Nashville, Tenn., the Negro people are marching to end segregation. In Raleigh, N. C., the white merchants are negotiating with the Negro citizens for an end to segregation in stores and restaurants. And this is only the beginning.

Like the shot at Concord in 1775,<sup>1</sup> which was heard around the world, so Birmingham is the opening gun in the final struggle for complete freedom in the U.S.

And like the American patriots of 1776, who in the Declaration of Independence stated, "We mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor", so did the Negro people of Birmingham bravely, unselfishly commit their own lives, their children, their jobs, to the struggle for freedom in 1963.

These brave Birmingham patriots have shown that threats, dogs, guns, bombs and whips cannot halt the masses, once they express their determination to win. No longer will the forces of reaction be able to coerce the American people into submission with their instruments of destruction or torture.

Of course, the victories in the struggle for freedom will not come easily. The white supremacists, the mad dogs of the ultra-Right, the Wall Street monopolies will do everything in their power to keep segregation going in the South, because disunity means lower wages, worse working conditions, poorer schools, bad health for the people, and more profits for Wall Street.

The timid and the reluctant will seek to slow down the movement. The rabble-rousers will try to divert its militancy. The uncomfortable silence of some labor leaders in contrast to the growing support and participation of the labor movement may hinder unity to some extent.

<sup>1</sup> One of the first battles of the American revolutionary forces against British rule, which actually marked the beginning of the American War for Independence (1775-83).—Ed.



But none of these can negate the victory that is Birmingham. Nor can these obstacles bar the relentless flow of freedom.

For completion of this victory, however, unity of the Negroes and white citizenry of the nation is essential. Many whites already see this. The working people, Negro and white humanitarians, the liberals, those actuated by enlightened self-interest are demonstrating this in Boston, Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and in dozens of other cities.

But to forge this unity that will be the only real guarantee of fulfillment of the new Emancipation Proclamation, the labor movement must assume the leadership.

This is only natural, since it was the workers in the unemployed movement, and on the ships, in the mines, on the auto and electrical assembly lines, who first recognized the mutuality of the interests of the Negro and white, and fought for the special democratic demands of the Negro people, to make it possible for the Negro worker to join in the united effort for the demands of the entire working class.

Now, with automation, speedup, rising taxes, restrictive laws, the working people and their unions face grave peril. But even more, the attack on the democratic foundations of the nation is increasing. To protect the people from the menace, total freedom of the Negro citizens is the key need.

The unity of the American people cannot be achieved except on the foundation of Negro freedom. And the American labor movement is destined, by its place in society, to be the leader in creating this unity. Every unionist, every ally of labor can help in his local union, in his community organizations to help bring this about.

June 9, 1963

### A Time for Firmness

It is written all over the political landscape: the time of truth has come to our nation. This nation cannot longer abide the moral dualism of its equalitarian democratic Constitutional vouchsafes, on the one hand, and its practices of racial exclusiveness and deprivation on the other.

The whole web of Jim Crow laws and practices which have bound Negro Americans into the murkiest and most dismal corners of our national household must be cleaned out to the last strand. Nothing less than the complete eradication of the total segregation and discrimination system and the corresponding integration of the 20 million Negro Americans into all aspects of the economic, political and social life of the country meet the necessity of this hour.

It is against this standard that the programs and words and deeds of leaders are measured today. The issue of the freedom of the Negro people from all manner of segregation and discrimination is posed for instant *solution*, it is no longer a question of *an approach* to a solution.

That the will of the people to secure the last full measure of their rights as free and equal American citizens cannot be crushed, deflected or appeased is affirmed each new day by the unanimity of their militant commitment to the mass struggles everywhere sweeping the country.

The impact of this glorious freedom struggle of the Negro people of our country is reaching every man, woman and child in the nation. It is revitalizing all that is good and forward-looking in the life of the nation and dealing a heavy blow to the forces of reaction and backwardness.

This struggle is a challenge not only to the Government but to all organizations of the people—the churches, the schools, the trade unions. It calls for a searching self-appraisal and demands the urgent elimination of all discriminatory practices in their respective areas of influence.

In this regard, all Americans can welcome the initiative of the President in calling to conference a hundred businessmen, owners of chain stores, factories, hotels and restaurants, for the purpose of enlisting their cooperation in ending the barbaric policy of Negro exclusion and discrimination.

We think similar conferences should be held with the heads of the big industries. Also, the leaders of international and key local unions should be brought to Washington and vigorously enlisted in the crusade to wipe out the shameful racist discriminatory system.

The Negro people and all thoughtful Americans know that these conferences can serve only as preparatory



preliminaries for the required and demanded necessary Federal enforcement action, through executive orders of the President and further definitive legislative enactments, in order to really secure to the Negro people their just rights as American citizens.

White House meetings with progressive Democrats and the week-long conference of Republican "liberals" under the leadership of Sen. Javits (N.Y.) appear as a serious preparation for a serious fight in the House and Senate against the Dixiecrats and Goldwater ultras who threaten to scuttle new civil rights legislation through filibustering and waving the banner of "states rights".

Nevertheless, it will be the pressure sustained by the people through their organizations' demonstrative actions, and their individual letters, petitions, and delegations to their Congressmen and to the White House which will hold the key to victory in this coming legislative fight.

In the meantime, the valiant struggles of direct action by the Negro masses in scores of cities and towns of the South and throughout the nation call for continuing support in the form of public rallies of solidarity, the raising of funds, and fraternal participation at the site of the actions.

Pressure upon the Attorney General and the President to use the already enormous powers of their offices to protect the Negro freedom fighters in the exercise of their rights to assemble, picket, and avail themselves of service in all public accommodations should be intensified.

June 25, 1963

### **The Foe of Negroes and the Nation**

The Southern ruling class, in the meantime, reveals that it has learned nothing and forgotten nothing. Reduced to a hard core of incorrigibles, who nevertheless possess state power in Alabama and Mississippi and local control of the police forces in a large number of Southern cities and rural areas, they are everywhere stepping up the murderous violence of their assault upon the lives and liberties of the Negro freedom fighters and their increasingly numerous white allies. The race-hating, fascist-hearted police forces of Jackson, Mississippi, have their equivalent

in Montgomery and Gadsden, Alabama; Albany, Georgia; Danville, Virginia, and elsewhere throughout the South.

In Danville, Virginia, the domain of the labor-hating Dan River Mills textile combine, the police who have filled the hospitals with the victims of their brutality have now added a new outrage to their long list of crimes—they invaded the sanctuary of a church, battering down its locked doors and dragging out yet more victims for beatings and jailings. In Gadsden, Alabama, electric cattle prods with a shock capacity of 10,000 volts have become a standard torture device against men, women and children freedom demonstrators.

This state of affairs cannot be abided any longer. Intervention by the Federal Government cannot await the slow grind of the legislative or judicial mills in providing protection to Negro victims of these police horrors.

In these areas the enemy of law and order is not only the mob but also police who are waging violent war against unarmed Negro men, women and children who are valiantly struggling to exercise their lawful rights as American citizens.

Telegrams and letters should go out to the Attorney General demanding forceful measures be taken against the savage police in these Southern towns, and that Federal marshals and troops be deployed to secure the lives and liberties of the Negro people there.

September 17, 1963

### **Deliberate Mass Murder**

The reporter quoted the pastor's 13-year-old daughter Barbara Cross as saying:

"The lights fell down and all of a sudden there was a big boom and there was a lot of smoke.

"Little children were screaming and everything."

And four little children were blasted to death on a September Sunday when segregationist revenge-seekers lobbed a 15-stick packet of dynamite through the basement window of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham where 80 Negro children were in Sunday School classes.

Upstairs in the main auditorium, some 400 parishioners



were seated in their pews, and the Rev. John Cross was conducting the preliminaries to the opening of his services as he stood in the pulpit.

The bomb exploded at 10:22 a.m. The pastor was hurled from his pulpit by the force of the blast. A yawning hole opened in the wall of the church. Splintered timber, chunks of plaster and fragments of stained glass windows showered down upon the worshippers who were scattered about the floor amidst upturned pews in eerie disarray.

In the basement, the horribly mangled bodies of the four little girls lay buried under the rubble. The head of little Denise McNair, who had taken the full blast of the explosive, was severed from her body, the rest of her was cut up in little pieces in the shambles of rubble that once was a Sunday School class.

Within moments, the area around the 16th Street Baptist Church—famed as the headquarters of the great protest demonstrations and marches against segregation during last May's struggle against former Police Commissioner Bull Connor and his police dogs—swarmed with riot-gun-armed police and the whole city was shrill with the shriek of police car sirens. The guns of a police force which had failed to find a trace of a single one of the perpetrators of 21 bombings were levelled at the Negroes.

Within hours the police had added to the toll of the children who were killed this Sunday in Birmingham by racists turned murdering beasts. Standing in the shadow of the church sanctuary, slight Johnny Robinson, age 16, was shot in the back and killed instantly by a uniformed policeman wielding a shotgun. And across town, 13-year-old Virgil Wade was gunned down while riding his bicycle at play.

In addition to the six young people who were killed, over a score of Sunday School children and adult worshippers were injured; some remained in the hospital gravely wounded. Almost simultaneously with the bombing of the church, as if in accord with a prearranged plan, fire bombs were exploded in several Negro business establishments and at residences of civil rights activists. The proprietor of a Negro establishment close by the church fumbled helplessly with his handkerchief in his hands as the tears streamed down his face, and said to a reporter

words whose sentiments echo the innermost feelings of 20 million Negroes in America this day. He said: "My grandbaby was killed in there. You know how I feel? I feel like blowing the whole town up."

From the National Headquarters of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Roy Wilkins, its executive secretary, branded the killing of the Negro children of Birmingham as "a deliberate mass murder" encouraged by Gov. George C. Wallace of Alabama.

"If the Government will not furnish more than piece-meal and picayune aid," said Wilkins, "Negroes will marshal such resources as we possess and employ such methods as our desperation may dictate."

Hurrying to Birmingham from Atlanta, the Rev. Martin Luther King wired a telegram to President Kennedy which declared in part:

"I'm convinced that unless some immediate steps are taken by the Federal Government to restore a sense of confidence in the protection of life, limb and property... we shall see in Birmingham and Alabama the worst racial holocaust the nation has ever seen."

From Unity House in Pennsylvania, where the Jewish Labor Committee's National Trade Union Council for Human Rights is in session, Charles Zimmerman, in a message to President Kennedy, said:

"It is imperative that the Federal Government act quickly and with full vigor to find the perpetrators of this fiendish deed. Every decent citizen in the land is sick to death of these acts of terrorism in our United States. They have got to be stopped, and only the National Government can do the job."

A week ago Governor Wallace was quoted as saying that "seven or eight funerals" were what was needed to solve the racial problems in Alabama. Last Thursday he criticized the work of the bomb gangs with the cynical comment that "of 47 bombings, no one had been killed".

John P. Roche, national chairman of Americans for Democratic Action, in a statement in the name of this progressive grouping in the Democratic Party, ridiculed the cynicism of Wallace in offering a reward for the bomb-killers' capture. He said:



"Governor Wallace has offered \$5,000 as his blood money in the savage murder of four small Americans. In fact, Wallace is as guilty as if he himself planted the bomb.

"It was Wallace who gave the lead to those who, in their own varied fashions, imitate his defiance of the law. The \$5,000 reward will not get him absolution from the terrible responsibility."

Dr. Robert W. Spike, executive director of the National Council of Churches Commission on Religion and Race, appealed in a call to white Christians in Birmingham to speak out against "the madness which has swept their city".

Declaring that the "lives of all Americans had been stained by these racist murders", the statement said that silence of Christian whites there had permitted this racist madness to take root and grow "and it has been encouraged and inflamed by the reckless and irresponsible statements of open defiance made by the Governor".

Benjamin J. Davis of the Communist Party declared in his telegram to Kennedy that the Negro people have received "a blow to their soul and they cry out that the murderers of their children be avenged and the segregation system that spawned such bestial racists be brought down once and for all".

November 1963

### **Within Birmingham**

The struggle of Negro Americans to secure their equal rights attained a nation-wide crest on May Day, 1963, when the representatives of the ruling circles of Birmingham, Alabama, acceded to a limited number of demands of the leaders of the embattled Negro community.

The city of Birmingham, Alabama, was the most powerful center of defiant resistance to all efforts toward loosening the chains of segregation which have held the Negro people of the South in the status of super-exploited, politically disfranchised, social pariahs.

Birmingham is a major industrial complex of the deep South. Numerous coalfields in its environs feed the giant furnaces which smelt its iron ore and manufacture its steel. It also has a booming textile industry. It has traditionally drawn its manpower from the rural areas where

the development of capitalist mechanization of agriculture has greatly depopulated the countryside. The nature of its extractive-type industry puts a premium upon brawn and endurance, and the ruling clique has always sought to keep investments in mass education and culture to a bare minimum. Its interest was always in a numerous unskilled working force, not in a technically skilled labor force. Birmingham became the classic example of a Southern industrial city which took over intact, and enforced with merciless police thoroughness, all of the social patterns of the plantation: feudal-like relations between employee and employer; slavery-like customs and laws to govern relations between Negro and white people of all classes. For decades, Birmingham has been the scene of innumerable heroic battles on the part of the Negroes to secure relief from the all-sided yoke of racist oppression which the ruling powers imposed with an iron hand. But in the month of May this old struggle took on a mass revolutionary character.

A united leadership of the Negro community (the Negro population being some 40 per cent of the total of the city) was consummated under the leadership of the Rev. Martin Luther King, and a program was adopted which called for the immediate substantial desegregation of a number of places of public accommodation, the right to register to vote, and a fair share of jobs in the semi-skilled and skilled classifications. To secure these modest demands all parties agreed upon mobilizing the entire Negro community to employ the tactic of massive non-compliance with the unjust segregation laws, and for demonstrative mass marches upon the city hall and mass picketing before the offending business establishments and public places.

All strata of the city's Negro population found a relationship to this campaign. The students abandoned their schools for the duration of the struggle and became the heroic front-rank shock brigaders in the wave after wave of marching demonstrators. The clergymen converted their churches into staging areas for the freedom fights and did missionary work among their white fellow clergymen. The Negro trade unionists persuaded their fellow white workers of the justness of their demands to the point, at least, of an alliance of neutrality. That is, that the white



workers would not respond to the call of the white supremacist Ku Klux Klansmen and White Citizens Council chieftains to join in mob actions against the Negroes. Leading Negro businessmen gave money and placed their cars and enterprises at the service of the movement.

During the month of mass demonstrations against the segregation system in Birmingham, over 40,000 Negro men, women and youth participated directly in the mass actions. This represented some 45 per cent of the total Negro population; while 98 per cent supported fully the economic boycott and made contributions to the fighting fund.

The city officials, under the leadership of the ex-FBI agent Mayor Hanes and the notorious police chieftain Eugene "Bull" Connor, reacted to the protests and demonstrations of the Negro community with a savagery and violence such as has seldom been witnessed in the history of the country.

An army of police, state troopers, sheriffs and irregular "deputies" were assembled and outfitted with helmets and submachine guns, carbines, pistols and billies and set forth against the peaceful demonstrators.

Squads of police on motorcycles were ordered to ride into the crowds of demonstrators. A tank-like armored car was used to mash demonstrating men and women against walls of buildings. German police dogs, trained to attack "colored" people only, were unleashed to bite and slash children and old people. Fire engines, pumping powerful jet streams of water through hoses equipped with special "Monitor" nozzles, such as are used in hydraulic mining, were employed against the demonstrators, cutting their skin and breaking their ribs.

In those days of unceasing demonstrations, hundreds of Negroes suffered painful injuries and over 3,000 were jailed, many of whom were children, some only 7 and 8 years old. The television cameras and the news photographers brought the story of the Negro demonstrators' valor and the Birmingham policemen's bestial brutality before the eyes of the whole nation and the world. The Birmingham Story seared the conscience of the nation and evoked sympathy demonstrations, and indignant demands upon the Kennedy government to intervene. The crime of racism and segregation in the U.S. received its ultimate

exposure in the Battle of Birmingham, and millions became moved to enroll actively in the struggle to end it.

Since Birmingham, the struggle to secure the rights of the Negro people, to dismantle the racist segregation and discrimination system has dominated the political and social scene inside the United States. The outcome of this great social struggle for a quantitative enlargement of democracy which has been mounted by the 20 million Negro Americans will have a direct impact on the domestic and foreign policies of the country.

Since Birmingham, the Negro people's movement for equality and full citizenship has gained even greater momentum, scope and militancy. Not only has every Southern city become a battlefield where the Negro masses are on the offensive against segregation laws and practices of white supremacy, but in every state and city of the country the Negro people are waging a determined fight against all manner of discriminatory patterns in the economic, political and social life of the nation. In such Southern cities as Nashville, Tennessee, Greensboro, North Carolina, Atlanta, Georgia, Richmond and Virginia, important advances have been made against the segregationists. In these cities many of the schools have been desegregated, theatres, bus terminals, restaurants and hotels have been compelled to open their accommodations to Negroes, and some gains have been made in the employment of Negroes in the city public service jobs and in heretofore restricted job classifications in private businesses and industries. Other Southern towns and cities continue to defy the orders of the Supreme Court, the urgings of the Federal Government spokesmen and the will of the nation, and strive to stave off the irresistible forward thrust of the Negro freedom movement with continuing mass jailings and barbarous police brutalities. This is the situation in Jackson, Mississippi, where the Fair Grounds have been converted into a concentration camp in which over a thousand Negro youth demonstrators are held on a starvation diet. This is the stand of Gadsden, Alabama, and Danville, Virginia, where Negro demonstrators have been subjected to the tortures of electric shocks from high voltage "cattle prods" wielded by the local police. This is what still happens in Albany, Georgia, and in Cambridge,



Maryland (just 40 miles from Washington, D.C., the capital of the country).

Between May Day and Independence Day (July 4) of this year (1963), Negro freedom fighters suffered nearly 10,000 arrests and over 2,000 hospitalized casualties. Indeed, though significant battles have been won, victory has not yet been attained. Yet the outcome of the struggle at Birmingham foreshadows the inevitability of victory for the cause of the Negro people.

Such non-Southern cities as Philadelphia, Boston, New York, Chicago, St. Louis, Los Angeles, Oakland, and scores of others have become scenes of militant mass actions in which the Negro communities are engaging the ruling powers in struggles for job rights and an end to all discrimination barriers, as well as expressing their solidarity with the freedom struggles in the South. The magnitude and the nation-wide character of these struggles are reflected in the size of such demonstrations as the June 23rd Freedom March in Detroit which brought 250,000 people into the streets, including several thousands of white trade unionists. They are reflected in the 10,000 strong demonstration in Boston, Massachusetts, the rally of 15,000 in Cleveland, the 70,000 who paraded in Los Angeles and San Francisco, the 11,000 strong work stoppage meeting in New York's fur market, the 50,000 who marched at the call of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in Chicago on July 4th, etc.

The great sweep of the Negro movement for "Freedom Now" has brought into the arena of social and political action the organizations of the major religious denominations. The National Council of Churches of Christ in America, representing 30 million believers, has entered as "activists" into the crusade against segregation and for the full integration of Negroes in the national community. The United Presbyterian Church, the National Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church, the National Catholic Welfare Council, the Rabbinical Council of America, and other denominations have made participation in the practical struggle to wipe out racial discrimination an article of faith for their churchmen.

The impact of the Negro people's struggle on the social conscience of the young generation of white Americans

has been given widespread expression. White high school and college students throughout the nation have rallied to the banner of the struggle for the full freedom of the Negro people and thousands are participating on picket lines, in sit-ins, and in solidarity pilgrimages to the battle fronts in the South where they stand shoulder to shoulder and suffer imprisonment with their fellow Negro students. Foremost among the numerous martyrs of the present great revolutionary upsurge of the Negro people are Medgar Evers, the young Negro leader of Mississippi who was shot in the back by an assassin, and William Moore, the young white freedom crusader who was murdered in Alabama.

The entire trade union movement in our country has been stirred to its depths by the example and challenge of the militant Negro people's rising for freedom and justice. There is already a substantial beginning in progress toward removing the remaining color bars and discriminatory practices in the unions, and major components of the trade union movement are giving important support to the struggles being waged by the Negro people's movement.

As a consequence of the mass actions of the Negro people and their supporters among the white population, the Federal Government has been compelled to exercise its Constitutional obligation to uphold the rights of its Negro citizens. Since 1954 the judicial branch of the Federal Government has upheld the Constitutional rights of Negro Americans in a series of Supreme Court decisions, but the executive branch—the President and the Attorney General in particular—has done little to enforce or secure these rights. But under the impact of the country-wide demonstrations on the part of the Negro masses, President Kennedy on June 12, 1963, addressed to the nation over radio and television a declaration of his support for the just and urgent demands of the Negro people for full integration in the economic, political and social life of the nation.

In a subsequent message to Congress the President called for the enactment of a Civil Rights Act which would have the effect of nullifying the bulk of the state anti-Negro laws, and generally outlaw the practices of racial segregation and exclusion in places of public accommo-



tion, in voting and voter registration, in employment practices, and in schools. He characterized the upsurge of the Negro people for justice as a "peaceful revolution" for those measures of democratic rights which white Americans have long since enjoyed. He warned that if Congress would not act promptly to secure those rights to the Negro citizens there would be no assurance that the Negroes would abandon their struggles in the streets for them, but on the contrary, he foresaw and feared a growth in civil strife.

While expressing appreciation for the President's stand, the Negro leaders rejected his plea that they "abandon the arena of the streets" in their struggle. They replied to the President in the words of the Reverend Martin Luther King: "We have learned over the years that the only meaningful gains have come from creative pressures..." and they promptly issued a call for a massive mobilization and a 300,000 strong march on Washington to demand instant compliance with the President's request to Congress for a Civil Rights Act, and to reply to the threat of a filibuster by the Southern Dixiecrat-ultra-Right Republican bloc of racist and reactionary Congressmen.

The determined struggles of the Negro masses for their human dignity, full freedom and equal rights, which are sweeping the country like a tidal wave, are destined to produce profound consequences upon the social and political relationships within the nation.

The elimination of the racial barriers between Negro and white Americans will greatly enhance the unity of the anti-monopoly front of struggle for general social progress, democracy and peace. Above all, the levelling of the color bar in industry and political life will make it possible for our working class to achieve a new quality of class unity wherein Negro worker will stand to white worker as brother to brother, and the class will be enabled to give its undivided attention to its true class enemy, the monopolists.

With the right to a political life secured to the Negro masses of the South, the popular base of the electorate will be strengthened by an influx of 3 to 5 million Negro working men and women. These new voters, who will have won their right to vote in long, fierce battles against the

Dixiecrats, these veterans of the Civil Rights Revolution will be fighting partisans of social progress all down the line. They may well contribute to a basic transformation in the relation of forces within the Democratic Party, and they may constitute the requisite force for the ouster of the Dixiecrats from Congress and for breaking the stranglehold of reaction over the South.

From its earliest days the Communist Party of the U.S. has given major attention to the struggle for "the economic, political and social equality of the Negro people". It has done so not only because the racist oppression of the Negro people in the United States was itself a shameful violation of the dignity of human beings, but also because the racist proscription of the Negro people stood athwart the path of social progress of the class and the nation.

This truth was perceived and expressed by the father of scientific socialism, Karl Marx, who wrote a hundred years ago, in an "Address to the People of the United States of America" (issued in September 1865): "As injustice to a section of your people has produced such dire results [*a four-year Civil War that cost the lives of a half-million American soldiers—J.E.J.*] let that cease. Let your [Negro] citizens of today be declared free and equal, without reserve.

"If you fail to give them citizens' duties, there will yet remain a struggle for the future which may again stain your country with your people's blood. ...

"We warn you then, as brothers in the common cause, to remove every shackle from freedom's limb, and your victory will be complete." (From: *The General Council of the First International 1864-1866*, pp. 311 and 312.)



## 5. NASHVILLE: A NEW LIFE BEGINS

### Re-entering an Airport

The airport at Nashville, Tennessee, has that streamlined look and the atmosphere of bustling efficiency that one has come to expect when riding the jet routes. Everything in its interior is reassuringly modern and competent to the eye.

But that which was most pleasing to my eyes were the things I did not see: the traditional and ubiquitous Jim Crow signs—FOR WHITE ONLY, FOR COLORED ONLY—so familiar to me on other times when I have come into this airport building, are nowhere to be seen. Those racist brand-marks, which for so long assaulted the dignity and assailed the eyes of Negro Americans in Southern travel and residence, are gone forever from this airport in Nashville.

On my way out of the passenger building through the MAIN waiting room and gate (no more side entrance and iron-pipe guard rails for the likes of Colored me, it's the MAIN lobby and FRONT doors from now on!) I stopped for a drink at the glittering porcelain white water cooler. It was not only a thirst born of the 80° in the shade temperature that made it a pause that refreshed, there was something else. This fountain only a short time ago carried the warning notice: "For White Only!" How nice the water tasted, for indeed one could savor the sweetness of Freedom in every swallow!

The cab dispatcher outside the air-terminal directed me to the first Yellow Cab in line when I told him I wanted to go to Fisk University (a Negro college). A pleasant-

mannered middle-aged white man was already seated on the rear seat of the cab when I slid in beside him. We exchanged salutations and a couple of irreverent remarks about the heat as I settled back into our shared seat and awaited the driver and a third passenger.

She took the seat beside the driver, this third passenger. A big woman she was, all of six feet and two hundred pounds. She was about 65 years old, I would guess, and she wore her thinning grey hair in a tight ball which was crowned with a precariously balanced bit of flowered black straw hat. She carried the whole burden of the conversation and it went like this:

"Are THEY still at it downtown?" she asked the driver. "Yes ma'am," the cab driver responded. He was ruddy faced, late thirtyish, a squat 5 foot 6.

"Oh they have been raising hell here these days," the driver expanded his reply.

"Why ma'am, yesterday and last night more'n a thousand of 'em marched through town shouting 'FREEDOM! FREEDOM!' and singing that they going to 'overcome' the white people. Some people, some boys of ours, were hurt and had to be taken to the hospital when they tried to stop them from parading down in the better part of town. Oh, it's been terrible, ma'am."

The large lady snorted, sighed a loud sigh, and gave forth with her "God be my witness judgment on these days and troubled time".

Said the lady, "I don't know what will become of us white people. We made this beautiful city and Southland bloom out of the wilderness. We took the colored people when they were just savages and taught them how to work and live in houses. Now look at them, they are acting like savages again. But you know, you can't blame them because they are like children. They don't know right from wrong. They always got to be led."

"But I don't know where the manhood went to, that the white people used to have in the South. Our men just sit around and let these outside agitators come in here and take over the Ni—s. Now they all gone crazy and think they are as good as you and me. Why they will want to be staying and eating at the Hermitage next!"

"But ma'am," the driver interjected, "THEY do want



it NOW! Why you will see when we get there that they are picketing right next door!"

"My daddy, who was in Texas, was the kind of real white man that had the answer for crazy colored people," the lady continued, "we have a picture with him and one of them he helped lynch, who acted uppity. What you have got to do is hang that preacher King and then burn his body with kerosene. Then all the rest will scatter like flies. They are just like a herd of sheep you know, get the leader and the others don't know which way to turn."

"Well, now," said the driver as he hitched himself forward a bit in the seat, bringing his ample stomach against the steering wheel, "that Rev. King is a mighty powerful colored man. They say that the President thinks mighty highly of him. I don't quite think he means to hurt us, it's the young ones around him."

The lady was impatient at the interruption, she hastened on with airing her view that, "Robert Kennedy should get a bullet in the head. What do you think, ain't there some real man about 70 years old, who has lived long enough around who is man enough to kill that Papal Communist. That's what he is you know: a Communist carrying out the orders of the Italian Pope. You can't trust these Catholics, and now they are right in the White House opening every door to the Communists, because there ain't no difference between them."

"Well, now, ma'am," the driver's voice expressed some tone of unease, and he cast a glance backward at the two silent strangers on the back seat—one being, old silent me, "they is good and bad in all the churches. And you know they say the President wants to do a lot for the plain people of the South and that's why he made the Vice President a Texan, like your daddy. You know Mr. Kennedy is coming to Nashville next Saturday and most folk here think it's mighty fine."

"Well I don't think so," said the lady, "I live here. I own property here. I live in New York too. I own property there. I also got a lot of real estate in Dallas. I just hop from one city to the other. You know it's all like Dr. Rev. Hargis said, it's written in the Bible: there will come a time when you won't be able to tell the flowers from the weeds."

"My God, driver, look at the Ni——s. It's a sea of 'em, and we got to get out right in the middle of 'em. I am going to look for a friendly looking one and just smile at him. That is what I do when I go up to Harlem to look at my property, that's the best thing to do, you hear me, boys in the back seat."

As the old lady was helped to the pavement by the driver, she muttered in a stage whisper to him: "That man sitting in the back seat is sure mighty sunburned, you reckon he could be a Nig—"

My silent seatmate took my hand as he got out. His face was red now but his voice was pleasantly warm and full of the soft modulations of Southern speech. "Have a nice stay, mister," he said. "And welcome to Nashville. Things are changing down here, and I for one, am glad."

The driver looked a bit startled to see me still seated in the cab. "Where do you want to go, sir?" he said.

"To Fisk University, the Negro school," I replied.

"It sure is a nice and sunny day, even if a little too hot for me," said the driver as he started up the cab. "Oh yes, indeed," I replied pleasantly, "much nicer than you can imagine now."

There is a new Nashville, in being and aborning, and I was on my way to make the acquaintance of its leaders, or at least, the midwives of this new birth.

### The Rally

The Lee Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church is one of a score or more of churches in the Negro community of Nashville which serve as assembly points where the freedom fighters rally and the people mass their forces and fortify their will to rally forward the frontiers of desegregation.

When I arrived at 8:00 p.m., the program was already in progress. Some five hundred people had filled all but a few spaces of the three files of neatly ordered mahogany-colored pews.

The audience was as still as though in prayer. At the lectern a youthful-looking man of medium stature, rich brown complexion and almost placid demeanor was speaking. His words came forth in measured tones at a



constant pitch. There was no dramatic gesturing of the hands and no histrionics in his speech. But his words came clearly to the farthest part of the room, for he spoke in full voice.

The audience leaned forward in their seats, jealous to lose no single word that was said. In general it was an audience of young people, evenly divided between men and women. But their elders accounted for a good fourth of the listeners.

I counted 30 white people in the crowded church. I recall two middle-aged and bespectacled white women whose shining eyes and determined faces fairly radiated their commitment and deep feelings. Others were young people, probably students, who seemed to have an easy and unself-conscious rapport with their Negro companions, among whom they were seated.

The young man at the lectern was speaking. He is a key leader in the struggle at Nashville. He is John Lewis, 23, and he was telling the crowd—

"We have been involved in a real revolution, a revolution for elementary democracy, in the past few days, since last Wednesday.

"We admit that the discipline of some hasn't been up to par but you must understand the processes of a revolution. People grow weary of the slow progress and their militancy bursts the bounds of our prescribed forms for the struggle.

"Now, all at once some people express horror and alarm because some in our midst have countered violent attacks with physical acts of self-defence. We don't want violence. No. But our movement has gone far beyond those disciples of our creed of passive resistance, it has awakened to direct action all of our folk who are weary of the oppressive burden of discrimination.

"Our community as a whole now, is restless and will not be denied. Yes, we will counsel our brothers in our tactics of struggle, but we understand them. We will save our wrath for those who continue the crimes of racism against our people."

"We had a friendly meeting with the Mayor today," John Lewis announced to a great wave of clapping and cheers. "Subsequently we called off the demonstration scheduled

for today as an evidence of our good faith and expectations of serious progress in the negotiations which are now proceeding well.

"We will determine on a day-to-day, yes, even hour-to-hour basis, when the demonstrations will begin again. In the meantime, we will continue to intensify and tighten up the economic boycott of all the offending stores and manufacturers.

"We are making great steps forward. We have all that is needed to win. The victory will be ours."

"Yes! We will!" the audience responded, in a mass chant, then applauded the unanimity of their own resolve and dedication. Each looked at his neighbor and the faces of us all were wreathed in smiles.

The Rev. J. Metz Rollins, a tall, thin and angular Presbyterian churchman, followed John Lewis to the speaker's stand. He wears a short-sleeved clergyman's vest with the inevitable full circle starched collar. The black vest and bright lights accent the pallor of his almost boyish face which seems constantly wreathed in an infectious grin.

His forehead is covered with a thick padding of three by three gauze bandages. Rev. Rollins's bandaged head is his proud, though still painful, trophy from last Friday's skirmish in the desegregation Battle of Nashville.

Rev. Rollins affirmed the progress report of John Lewis and added that he had seen Negro policemen in the downtown area today for the first time in the modern history of the city. This was one small achievement already secured from the negotiations. (Heretofore, Negro policemen were limited to patrols within the confines of the "Negro districts" of the city.)

Rev. J. Metz Rollins, then introduced the guest speaker of the meeting, the Rev. C. T. Vivian, a leader in the Southern Christian Leadership Council, who had just returned from two weeks on the Birmingham front.

Rev. Vivian is slight of stature, but his whole being is fairly vibrant with energy as he speaks. The finely wrought features of his lean face of copper hue are dramatically mobile as he speaks in eloquent imagery and sonorous tones.

Rev. Vivian tells the Birmingham story. There are some sobs in the hall when he tells of the stoic courage of the



first little eight-year-old girl who led her squad of pre-school children toward the demonstration point before the City Hall. Between her and the objective were arrayed a line of helmeted policemen with tear gas, shotguns, pistols and clubs. On either side of the little band, fierce packs of police dogs strained at their leashes, leaping into the air, baying and howling. In the distance firemen were affixing the Monitor nozzles on their hoses. But the steps of the little heroine and her brave comrades never wavered. They had passed through the first line of police before the foul-mouthed "Bull" Connor found his voice and barked out the order to "arrest the little black bastards! Call the wagon! Lock 'em in jail!"

"When they see Negroes in movement for their freedom," spoke Rev. Vivian, "coming forward in tens, then hundreds, and now in thousands and tens of thousands, they think 'riot' in their minds. But there was no riot in Birmingham, there was just the violence of the police and those whom they duped in defense of the indefensible against the righteous march of the undeniable."

Rev. Vivian explained the tactics of non-violence as the method for morally isolating the enemy of the Negroes' human civil rights, and as the method which can best rally the maximum sympathy and active support to the cause of Negro freedom.

"The whole world responds to the dignity and nobility of our non-violent struggle," he said, and recounted the great manifestation of solidarity which the people of Birmingham, England, had expressed to the Negroes of Birmingham, Alabama, as a case in point. "We break the unjust law in order to create a just society," he said.

"Some people say it's wrong to interrupt the work of the students, to have them miss their classes for the moment." Rev. Vivian was fielding the challenge before pegging home the following reply: "There will be no jobs or future in freedom for the students tomorrow if they don't struggle today."

Rev. Vivian was not impressed by what the Federal Government has done in the cause of securing the rights of Negro citizens to date. "If they can maintain a cordon of U.S. marshals to protect Caroline in the White House, the Kennedys can call out marshals to protect our children

in Birmingham!" he declared as the church rang with approving shouts and thunderous applause.

"There is something wrong about a nation that allows a psychotic like Bull Connor and a George Wallace to rule a great city and a great state," he reflected and concluded that "it is our patriotic duty to make them remove this wrong thing, and set things right."

The Rev. Vivian affirmed his conviction that through the struggles being waged in Birmingham, Nashville, and in a steadily growing list of cities throughout this nation, "those hoses of hate are going to be turned off", for the very age in which we live has "located us on the threshold of radical changes in the attitudes and actions of our fellow countrymen, and we are going to pass through into a new situation where our total rights will be secured unto us".

After the speech of the Rev. Vivian, there were many questions and comments passed between the speakers and the people in the audience. They concerned themselves with the further strengthening of the boycott and stepping up of the letter and telephone campaign to the Mayor in order to manifest the scope and intensity of the community's support of the demands of the movement.

Before the benediction was given by Pastor E. M. Alcorn, everyone filed up to a table at the front to leave their personal contribution for the fighting funds, as they sang the theme song of the Freedom Riders: "We Shall Overcome."

### A Hero of the Movement

"You know what?" John Lewis queried on to reveal that: "This marks the first time in the history of Nashville that the political power structure of this city has entered into serious negotiations with representatives of the Negro community for a concrete program of desegregation demands!"

John Lewis is one of a committee of leaders of the Negro people of Nashville who are negotiating the terms of fulfilment and compliance with a lengthy list of specific demands of the Negro citizens to secure their total integration in the economic, political and social life of the larger community.



I was interviewing John Lewis in a well-appointed small bedroom-study which comfortably accommodated two students in the new senior men's dormitory on the Fisk University campus.

It was approaching midnight and John Lewis's roommate was already asleep in one of the two single beds. I sat on the edge of the other bed. John was seated in an armchair at one of the two desks in the room.

It was already apparent from the speech I had heard him make earlier in the evening at the AME<sup>1</sup> Chapel rally, that John Lewis was indeed an extraordinary man, but I was hardly prepared for the first statistic about his life which he gave me.

Twenty-three years old, John Lewis has been arrested 23 times! All of these arrests have been in connection with his four-year-old career as a freedom fighter against U.S. racism. He has been incarcerated in the jails of Birmingham and Montgomery, Ala., Jackson, Miss., Charleston, Mo., Cairo, Ill., and Nashville, Tenn.

He was in the party of original Freedom Riders who rode a gory glory trail aboard a Greyhound Bus through Alabama and Mississippi in May of 1961. On this freedom pilgrimage, he and others of his colleagues were severely beaten when a mob of 3,000 attacked them in the Montgomery bus depot. He will carry through life the livid scar from the hole that was knocked in his head during that battle. When leading a sit-in action to desegregate a Nashville lunch counter, he had hot water poured on him. The hoodlums also poured soap powder over the heads of the sit-iners. The restaurant owner then locked them in the establishment and turned on the fumigator machines which poured out a deadly rodent-killing spray. Outside the locked glass door the police laughed as those within banged the door or doubled up in convulsions of coughing. Friends outside finally broke the glass and prevented them from being asphyxiated.

John Lewis was born in the little rural town of Troy, Ala. He has six brothers and three sisters of whom seven are younger than he. He grew up on a 100-acre lot of an

<sup>1</sup> AME—African Methodist Episcopal Church, quite influential among American Negroes.—Ed.

old plantation there in Pike County, Ala. His father works the land and drives a school bus for the Pike County School. His mother is a laundry worker in the Baptist Orphan Home. The life of the elder Lewises is a life of toil, day in and day out, to feed and provide that bare modicum of human necessities for the younger seven brothers and sisters of John Henry.

Yet they are a couple who have a great faith in the powers which education will bestow upon their children to effect their deliverance from a life of misery and poverty. A part, no matter how small, of all their earnings is set aside for the education of their children.

And so it came to pass that John Lewis graduated high school in 1957 and went on to study at the Pike County Training School near Dothan, Ala. From there he went to the American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville, Tenn.

This June he graduates from Fisk University with a bachelor of arts degree in philosophy and religion. Scholarships and after hours jobs have made it possible for him to complete his studies at Fisk. At the same time he has been able to write an unexcelled record of personal heroism and leadership over a wide-ranging span of the Negro people's freedom struggle.

He is a member of the central committee of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee,<sup>1</sup> as well as being a member of the leadership in the Nashville chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. John Lewis was a chief spark plug in the three-year battle to break through the rigid segregation pattern of Nashville.

On the threshold of the biggest achievements yet registered in this hard-fought struggle, he took a look backwards to tell me something of its beginnings. And this is what he said:

"We students began mass picketing and demonstrative actions to break down segregation in places of public accommodation in Nashville in February of 1960. We first made approaches to the Mayor who was Ben West then.

<sup>1</sup> Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)—a youth organization formed in 1961 at the height of the Negro sit-in movement and the Freedom Rides in the South. It is one of the leading organizations in the present struggle for Negro rights.—Ed.



Our confrontations were pleasant enough but he undertook no responsibility to bring pressure on the merchants of the city. On the contrary, he acted on the demands of the merchants to stop the demonstrations of the Negro students.

"First, myself and eight other students were arrested. Then, there followed a period of the most violent police brutality against the student demonstrators who were engaged in restaurant sit-ins and stand-ins at the theatres. There were mass arrests and merciless beatings at the hands of the police. The police brutality enflamed and attracted mobs of white hoodlums. Some students had lit cigarettes pushed into their skin while they sat on restaurant stools. The Negro City Councilman, Z. Alexander Looby, had his home bombed.

"These outrages, however, had the effect of cementing the unity of this Negro community and rallied to our aid the support of white liberals, students and ordinary decent-minded white men and women who felt ashamed by the scenes of pitiless brutality that they witnessed on the streets or over the TV.

"As a result of these militant struggles which the students initiated, several stores agreed to admit Negroes to their lunch counters. These were the Walgreen Drug Store; McClellands, Kress, Cain, Sloan and Harvester Dept. Store. Later, W. T. Grant and the 5 & 10 Stores desegregated their lunch counters. These victories were followed on May 10, 1960, by the restaurant and waiting rooms at the Bus Station being opened to Negroes.

"On February 1, 1961, the now celebrated Nashville stand-in demonstrations began. Over a thousand students were involved in these demonstrations each day for 13 successive days.

"Nashville's four movie theatres are all on the same side of the street in a four block area between 8th and 4th on Church St. Every night between 7 and 9 o'clock some 100 students stood at the ticket windows and dominated the lobbies of each of the four theatres.

"In the course of this 13-day battle hundreds of students were arrested. Several times the police permitted a mob of 2,000 organized hoodlums to attack our picket lines with eggs, rocks and sticks. Nevertheless after the thirteenth

day of demonstrations the theatre operators capitulated to our demands. Now all the theatres in the city are desegregated.

"In the earlier struggle to end racial exclusion from the restaurants although a substantial gain was registered, there remained many hold-outs. For example—the Wilson-Quick Drug Store chain of some 15 stores, all with lunch counters still refused service to Negroes. The Simple Simon uptown store opened up to Negroes but the downtown store still excluded Negroes. The 35 Crystal Chain hamburger stands still refused service to Negroes. During a sit-in at one of these Crystal Chain stands the operator sprayed insecticide and poured ammonia on student sit-iners.

"So, in October of 1962 we started a new attack on these stores. Myself and seven other students were arrested and charged with unlawful conspiracy to hurt business. In a trial that lasted six days we were convicted and sentenced to 90 days in the work-house.

"This shocking miscarriage of justice angered and aroused the people. After the sentence was handed down on March 6th of this year, the local papers editorialized that a great wrong had been done. The entire faculty of Vanderbilt University (white) Divinity School protested the conviction.

"A statement denouncing the sentence was issued by almost all the Catholic, Jewish and Protestant clergy of Nashville. The impact of this outrageous trial against the background of the headlines coming out of Greenwood, Miss. and Birmingham, Ala. fashioned the mood and fired the will of our citizens for the present struggle.

"These things coincided with the fact that a new Mayor and city administration took office on April 1 of this year. We here in this community came to a consensus that this administration must start out right, must take all the measures necessary to abolish the last vestiges of segregation and the practice of excluding Negroes from the life of the city. Our people are determined not to leave a single base in Nashville for the racists to use to mount a resurgent restoration of the hated segregation system.

"The Mayor and the economic power structure in Nashville must grant our just demands for equality in all



things as truly free citizens; we will not demobilize our forces, or yield the streets until there is restored to our people the last violated right and privilege enjoyed by any other citizen."

John Lewis is not only a man of action but a man of ideas and a serious student of philosophy. He was curious about my own beliefs and how I arrived at them. He expounded on the ideals and philosophical concepts of the doctrine of non-violent social action and speculated about the prospects of its concept becoming the governing one in the sphere of world politics and relations between the Great Powers in the nuclear age of over-kill.

He spoke with troubled anxiety about the job prospects for the college graduates of his class-year.

He expressed the wish to see at first hand the socialist concepts of a planned economy in operation in the Soviet Union some day. Likewise, he held forth the hope of some day being able to travel in the new countries of Africa which have just emerged from the long night of colonialism.

### Courageous Churchman

"It is the final phase of the democratic revolution," he was saying, "it is as irrepressible as the earlier phase that was fought out by great armies during America's Civil War some hundred years ago."

It was the Rev. J. Metz Rollins who was talking to me about the great waves of the Negro people's civil rights struggles which are flooding through the deep South and washing into the farthest recesses of the whole country.

We were seated at a table in a small café of home-like informal atmosphere. It was one of the best of the four or five cafés which were all the public dining facilities Negroes had in Nashville until the recent breakdown of the racial barriers in a number of eating establishments in this city. We were continuing our conversation over coffee, and the Rev. Rollins was saying:

"What is distinctive about this phase of the revolution is that Negroes are not being fought over, they are now the fighters for their own freedom.

"What is unique about this phase of the democratic

revolution in our country is that our weapons are non-violent.

"We are able today, thanks to the vast changes that have come about in the country and in the world at large, to get an instant response from our appeal to public opinion—nationally and on a world scale. The segregationists, the racists, are being isolated, reduced, and pilloried in the spotlight of world public opinion.

"By resoluteness in our mass struggle, we are gaining the active intervention of a national and international public opinion of such force that our enemies cannot prevail for long against it."

The "Movement", as it is referred to by the dedicated partisans in the mighty freedom upsurge of the Negro masses in America today, has brought to the fore a numerous leadership of extraordinary men and women. You encounter them in every community you visit, no matter how small. Some few of them—like the Revs. Martin Luther King, Shuttlesworth and Abernathy are already national figures and their names are known throughout the world—but the roster of talented and dedicated leaders of this Movement is a lengthy one indeed.

Rev. J. Metz Rollins, like John Henry Lewis, is an honored name on that roster. He told me something of his life.

J. Metz Rollins is 36 years old and was born in Newport News, Virginia. He is a Presbyterian minister and the son and grandson of Presbyterian ministers. He has a brother who is a postman in his home town.

After completing his studies in the segregated public schools of Newport News, he entered Johnson C. Smith College and graduated from its Theological Seminary in 1947. He later taught for three years at his alma mater. He married his home town sweetheart in 1950. They have two children, a girl of 11 and a boy of six.

He said of his early years:

"Father's church was one of the few open forums for social and civic activity in our town; the NAACP and other groups would hold meeting there.

"Our home was always rather short on funds, but there were many books and an abundance of ideals in rich supply there."



In addition to the atmosphere of inquiry and truth-seeking that abounded in the family circle, "Metz" recalls fondly the years of '43 and '44 spent at Hampton Institute (Va.) as especially stimulating to the development of his social outlook.

He spent wonderful hours, he said, with a history professor by the name of John Hall and a speech teacher named Gladstone. "John Hall was a white man who had liberated himself from racial prejudice, and Gladstone helped liberate me from conformist strictures in thinking. My horizon broadened greatly from my contact with these men of ideas."

In 1953 Rev. Rollins went to Florida to organize a church in Tallahassee and minister to the students at Florida A and M College. It was in Tallahassee that he began his deep involvement in the struggle for Negro freedom and social justice.

Beginning in an intervention against the wanton police brutality which held this town of 42,000 souls in a vise of terror, he went on to become an outstanding leader of the notable Bus Boycott struggle of June 1956 which was directed by the Inter-Civic Council. He was arrested during this struggle, in October 1956.

He came to Nashville in 1958 to become part of a bi-racial team created by the United Presbyterian Church to conduct practical work in the cause of desegregation and democratization. His associate in this mission is Rev. John Marion, white. Their territory is the whole canvas of the 18 Southern and border states. He travels a lot and maintains a voluminous correspondence.

He is a member of the board of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and it was through its work that he came to play the prominent role in the current Nashville Battle.

Rev. Rollins commiserated with me about the McCarran Act<sup>1</sup> and ruefully recalled the experience he had while in Florida with that state's "little" McCarran Act. He had been one of those subpoenaed to appear before the infa-

<sup>1</sup> The 1950 Internal Security Act—a reactionary, anti-democratic law passed by Congress in 1950, carrying the name of its initiator and sponsor in the Senate. It is directed against all American progressives, especially the Communist Party of the U.S.A.—Ed.

mous John's Committee of the Florida State Legislature when this body was carrying out a televised wild inquisition against so-called "radicals, NAACP'ers and Communists".

It turned out we had another bond in common, the stool pigeon used against him and the NAACP leaders in Florida, had been used against me and my colleagues in Foley Square during the Smith Act trials—the notorious police agent J. B. Matthews!

Rev. Rollins gave me a ride across town to my next appointment. That in itself was a story to tell: at every stop light he would be called on to exchange a comment or answer a question from someone in an adjoining car or pedestrian on the street. He seemed to know the first names of hundreds of people, and all Nashville knows him, the battered but unbowed leader of Nashville's Negroes' new offensive to eradicate the last remains of Jim-Crowism.

I said good-bye to the youthful Rev. Rollins, that tall, thin man with the deliberate Virginia speech and the engaging smile and that easy manner of the sure of eye and confident of purpose.

While awaiting my next appointment I glanced at the excerpt of a letter to him that the Rev. Rollins had permitted me to copy. It had been written by a white woman of the Presbyterian faith who lived in Philadelphia and she had seen his bloodied face framed in the television screen in her own comfortable living room so many miles away on that day of truth when he faced the hoodlum mob on the streets of Nashville.

And here is what the Philadelphia lady wrote to the Rev. Rollins: "I am grieved that your just witness has been answered by a rock thrown in your face.

"There are many others in Nashville who have gone through this grim day with you, and for them, too, I feel a deep pride and deeper respect for the courage and the forbearance which have been put to a bitter test indeed.

"Realizing that this letter can mean little, but compelled to express my shame that you must go through this to achieve a goal so clearly right, I can only say that I am deeply humbled by your humility, express my faith that such endeavors as yours will not long be thus denied, and wish you Godspeed."

I reread the fragment from the letter with a feeling



within me of great confidence in our people and the processes of our social evolution. The things set in motion here in the heartland of the old South by a people whose time of freedom has come are even now reaching out throughout our vast land to stir into a new political life great social forces which will reshape the direction of this nation.

### The Valiant Dr. Vivian

When a great cause attains its crest, the daring deeds of individual heroes give way to the tidal heroism of the masses. The courageous bearing of yesterday's pioneers has become the norm of conduct for the tens of thousands of Negro freedom fighters in the South today.

This "Movement" has given birth to many outstanding tribunes of the people's pain and aspirations, but there is no one who projects the lofty objects of its cause with greater fervor and more poetic eloquence than the small-framed, almost frail young man with the diffident manner—the contours of whose warm tanned face, even at rest, wears a shy smile—the Rev. C. Tindell Vivian.

It was not easy to get Rev. Vivian to talk about himself; but in the course of our conversation, which ranged over a wide spread of topics, he told me some of the biographical highlights of his life.

Rev. Vivian is 37 years old and he is the pastor of the Cosmopolitan Community Church in Chattanooga, Tenn. He is a regional representative of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC),<sup>1</sup> the principal organization of the Southern "Movement" which is headed by the Rev. Martin Luther King.

Rev. Vivian was on the first Freedom Rider bus to enter Jackson, Miss., last year (1961). He suffered a severe beating at the hands of mobsters in Jackson's bus depot and was arrested during that fight. During the 1961 sit-ins in Nashville he suffered a painful injury when rioting mob-

<sup>1</sup> Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)—an influential and important U.S. Negro organization formed in 1957 after the successful Bus Boycott movement in Montgomery, Alabama. Its leader, Martin Luther King, a 1964 Nobel Peace Prize winner, is one of the most prominent figures in the struggle for Negro rights.—Ed.

sters attacked the demonstrators; he was struck in the mouth by a stone. He was also arrested in Little Rock and again near Nashville in anti-segregation protest actions.

C. Tindell Vivian was born in the state of Missouri and raised in Macomb, Ill. He graduated from Western Illinois State Teachers College. Subsequently he studied at the American Baptist Theological Seminary where he took his degree in theology. He has also taken graduate studies at Scarritt College in Nashville. Rev. Vivian is the proud father of three sons and three daughters. His wife is from Pontiac, Mich., and a graduate of Michigan State College.

Before removing to Chattanooga he had built and pastored the First Community Church in Nashville, Tenn.

During his years in Nashville he played a leading role in the formation of the Nashville Christian Leadership Council and took a prominent part in the anti-segregation struggles which it led; notable among them being the great city-wide march to the Mayor's office which helped bring an end to the then prevalent hoodlum violence against the Negro desegregation demonstrators.

In addition to these activities, Vivian has been an editor of the Nashville *News-Star* and various Baptist religious publications.

There are two "new" phrases which appear and reappear when members of the Southern freedom movement are discussing the progress and problems of the cause; they are—"the economic power structure" and "the political power structure". The concept has entered into popular understanding and the phrases into popular usage that the problem is the creature of the "power structure",—that here is where the enemy is to be located and against whom the real battle is joined.

It is not the "white man" in general who is seen as the enemy but those white men (and now and again they include some particular Negroes) who occupy the top rungs of privilege in the political and economic life of the city, state, and nation and compose "the economic and political power structure".

"It is not a struggle between black men and white men," C. Tindell Vivian quotes Martin Luther King as saying, "but between those who seek justice and those who practise injustice; between the deprived, exploited, discriminated



and those who do the exploiting and who have built their political careers and amassed their wealth through denying equal rights and opportunities to others."

"Nashville, thanks to the unflagging struggles of Negroes themselves, has registered progress in the area of the political enfranchisement of its Negro citizens," Vivian observed, and pointed to the fact that—

"Now there are five Negro city councilmen in metropolitan Nashville though Negroes are only some 12 per cent of the population."

Of the five Negroes in the city council, two are lawyers and prominent in the civil rights campaigns—Attorney Z. Alexander Looby and Robert Lillard; two are businessmen—Harold Love and John Driver. The fifth Negro member of the city council is a worker, a member of the Communications Workers of America, of the AFL-CIO, and a member of the state committee of the AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education—Mansfield Douglas.

I told Rev. Vivian that I had been especially interested in interviewing Nashville's lone labor councilman and how I regretted the fact that Mr. Douglas had terminated our conversation in near panic when I told him I represented *The Worker* newspaper.

"That's a sadness," commented Rev. Vivian, "that some of our good people who stand up to mobs and against the fury of club-wielding police, will sometimes still flee in terror when confronted with the advocate of a new idea. It is especially unbecoming of us who are ourselves fighting racial prejudice to manifest political prejudice in relations with each other."

The conversation turned to the question of the great need for the trade unions undertaking a larger role in the movement to put a final end to discrimination in the economic plant and political life of the country.

"It is not that we haven't received moral support and some small financial contributions from some of the international unions," the energetic spokesman of the SCLC said, "but the required commitment, involvement, the hoisting of the banner of our just rights to the top of their (the trade unions') own staff—this measure of understanding has yet to be attained by the labor leaders."

"But are there not many Negro trade unionists among the ranks and leadership of the Movement?" I asked.

"Precisely!" Rev. Vivian replied, "and that is the more reason for a greater role to be expected from organized labor. The responsibility lies not only with the labor leaders but with the rank and file of the Negro membership who must bring the demands of our people forward in their unions as they do in our own churches."

"If the Birmingham 'power structure' should foolishly backslide on its agreement with the SCLC and Revs. King and Shuttlesworth to introduce a substantial measure of desegregation," I asked of Rev. Vivian, "would you see the tactics of the struggle developing any differently?"

"The tactics of the non-violent direct mass action have proven themselves sound. We will continue them."

"But, should the Birmingham officials and business leaders betray their commitment, then the struggle there will take on a new and more profound character. Birmingham, as you know, is a major center of heavy industrial plants. It is a city of steel, ore, coal and some textiles. There the Negro workers are almost half of the working force in these basic plants that determine the economy of the whole city and area."

"These Negro workers have the capability of stopping every wheel that turns in that great steel city. They can do it. And if it becomes called for they will do it. This would be an economic boycott of a different quality. It would be withholding our labor power from the pits and the mills and the furnaces and the kitchens of all those who man the heights of the economic power structure in Birmingham."

"I believe that if it ever comes to this stage, that we would not be wanting in acts of support and solidarity from Negro and white working men in many factories throughout this land. Now what do you think?" the Rev. Vivian ended on this rhetorical query.

I think my people have given a new leverage to my working class, to attain a new elevation in consciousness and vision, and new strength in hands clasped that are reaching through, and will breach, the racial walls of divisions, and I think this development is putting my nation on the threshold of a new birth of freedom.



And I think as they have done and are doing in Nashville, so will they do and are doing, throughout the South and the country, until the last racist barrier has fallen in this, our nation.

I think the voluble old lady in the Yellow Cab on the ride to Nashville from the airport will not win the allegiance of the worker-driver for a backward march. Rather do I think that silent ally who shared the rear seat with me will yet find his voice in time and it will be the more persuasive, for its message will be born of the necessity to get on with the common tasks of making our America a thing of beauty in a world of peace.

### 10 Demands by the Negotiating Team

The working papers of the negotiating team for the Negro community in its meetings with Mayor Beverly Briley set forth the following demands:

(1) That no segregation or racial discrimination be practised anywhere in or by the government of metropolitan Nashville itself. This would include hiring and appointing personnel purely on basis of qualifications, with no consideration whatsoever being given to racial identity. That all institutions and establishments operated by the local government cease practices of racial exclusiveness, and that parks, swimming pools, and other recreational facilities be opened to all citizens.

(2) That the operators of restaurants, drug stores, religious establishments such as the YMCA and YWCA and the Church-sponsored hospitals and other establishments and businesses be made aware of the fact that the leaders of local government feel strongly that the practice of racial discrimination in accommodations and employment be promptly ended as such practices are not in the best interest of the city as a whole nor any of our citizens.

(3) That the new metropolitan government forbid law enforcement officers from arresting persons when their only real offense is that they have an unfulfilled desire for full and complete freedom as American citizens. Further, we urge that Negro law enforcement personnel be used in the entire metropolitan area whether that area be Negro

or not and that they receive regular promotions as do other officials.

(4) We want the enactment and enforcement of laws which will serve as a deterrent to the violent forces in the community which would intimidate those who dream and labor for justice, equality and freedom.

(5) That operators of hotels and motels in the metropolitan area be made aware of the fact that metropolitan Nashville would profit by an increased number of conventions if their facilities were open to all persons and that city officials are intensely interested in this economic dividend as well as the moral implications of the practice of exclusiveness.

(6) That the services of no person whose salary is paid by the taxes of all the citizens be used to prosecute those whose only real offense is that they work for the cause of freedom.

(7) That metropolitan officials set into motion machinery which will condemn and prohibit housing discrimination and will defend the right of any citizen to build or buy in any area he may choose.

(8) That metropolitan officials work diligently for the enactment of public accommodations and fair employment laws.

(9) That metropolitan officials call upon established human relations groups and knowledgeable individuals to assist in whatever manner possible in helping to immediately erase the color line from the affairs of Nashville.

(10) That a human relations commission as a part of the structure of the metropolitan government be established. Such a commission to be a permanent part of the government with full-time concern for the problems in the area of human relations.



## 6. NIGHTMARE IN MISSISSIPPI

April 7, 1963

### "Law and Order"—the Mississippi Way

A cabal of racist madmen are in power in Mississippi. All the agencies of law and order from the local police chiefs, county sheriffs and local departments of the FBI, to the Federal District Court Judges and Gov. Ross Barnett and the state officials are using all instruments of "law and order" to wage a bloody war against that half of the state's population who are Negro Americans.

What is the offense of the Negroes? They are acting on the assurances of the U.S. Supreme Court and the declaration of President Kennedy and the Attorney General that the U.S. Constitution and the Federal Civil Rights law protect them in the exercise of their citizenship rights. They have been endeavoring to assert the most elementary right of citizens—to register as voters.

The response of the white supremacist minions of "law and order" to the modest petition of Negro citizens of Greenwood and elsewhere in Mississippi has been an unmatched display of racist savagery. Negroes have been jailed by the score, they have been shot down in cold blood; unarmed men, women and youth have been beaten in broad daylight by policemen who unleashed German police dogs against them.

All this has been done under the eyes of agents of J. Edgar Hoover's FBI who, consistent with their record of never having brought to justice a single lyncher or assailant of a Negro in the history of the FBI, raised not one word of protest or made a single intervention to protect the lives or liberties of a single victim of the "official"-led mobsters.

The nation can turn at its own peril a deaf ear to the cries of anguish from the valiant Negro freedom fighters. The challenge Mississippi has thrown to Washington and liberty-loving Americans everywhere is inescapable.

The unions, the churches, all the democratic forces of the nation are called upon to act in solidarity with the Negro people of Mississippi to secure their rights against the criminal state officials who are waging a murderous war against them.

President John F. Kennedy must declare a state of national emergency in Mississippi and send in a full complement of Federal police authorities to enforce the total equal rights of the nearly one million Negro citizens there, and bring about the imprisonment of the officials guilty of violating their oaths of office by carrying out this reign of terror against Negro citizens.

Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy should go at once to Greenwood, and deputize several hundreds of Negro citizens as deputy U.S. marshals with arms and mandates to secure law and order and safeguard the lives, liberties and properties of the people of Mississippi from the racist madmen who are in open revolt against all the norms of civilization and the laws of the United States.

All aid to the just struggle of the Negro people of Mississippi.

June 4, 1963

### The Attack on the Children

Last Friday's scene on North Farrish Street in Jackson, Mississippi, was characterized by Mississippi's NAACP state secretary as "just like nazi Germany!" And so it was. Squads of gun-wielding and club-swinging white men in the uniforms of local and state police beat and shoved 600 Negro children into patrol wagons, garbage trucks and canvas-covered public works trucks. The police cursed and yelled vile epithets at the young boys and girls whom they were belaboring.

A holiday crowd of hoodlums sporting Confederate soldier caps and waving the Stars and Bars, banner of the slavemasters' cause, gave out with rebel yells from the sidewalks.



Other police held the leashes of a score of wildly leaping and howling bloodhounds and German police dogs.

The motors of the transports strained and roared as one truck after another raced into line with their jam-packed cargoes of Negro youngsters who were as neatly dressed in starched blouses and pressed pants as though they were going to a party.

But rising above the loud uproar of the bedlam noises could be heard the rhythmic chant of the valiant young freedom fighters:

"We want our FREEDOM, yea, yea! We'll have our FREEDOM, yea, yea!"

Saturday, the police—now armed with riot guns—arrested another hundred Negro youth and adults who staged a demonstration in the Negro section, in protest over the arrest earlier that day of Roy Wilkins, national executive secretary of the NAACP, and Medgar W. Evers, NAACP state secretary. Other Negroes were dragged from porches and pulled out of barber shops for "making faces at" the cops who patrolled the Negro area like "stormtroopers".

Jackson's Mayor, Allen Thompson, boasted that "emergency" facilities have been pressed into service and now the city jails can accommodate 10,000 demonstrators at a time. A huge barbed-wire pen has been formed in the State Fair Grounds where the arrested demonstrators are held for hours in the blazing sun before being marched off to cattle exhibition barns where improvised shower and toilet facilities have been put up for them.

Hundreds of mothers waiting a block away from the improvised jail bitterly protested the fact that their children had not been fed or given drinking water. Some of their jailed children are only five and six years old.

This is the way it is in a Southern city and state and, indeed, in a whole region of our country, the United States of America, in June of 1963.

Last Thursday in Tallahassee, Florida, some 220 Negro Americans peacefully picketing in front of the Jim Crow Florida Theatre on Monroe Street were brutally bombarded with tear gas grenades before their mass arrest was effected.

It is not different in the Carolinas, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Virginia, Alabama.

The Old South, the South of segregation and anti-Negro racist hatred, is in the throes of death but the violence of its convulsions is shaking the nation. It is vainly trying to stay the irrepressible march of the Negro people's legions of liberation with an orgy of police violence against the youthful shock-brigaders who man the front ranks in the struggle for freedom and democracy in the South. They are waging a merciless war against the children and their standing order of the day is to beat and to jail, to beat and to jail!

But the nation and the peoples of the whole world have grown sick of this horror that the racist madmen are perpetrating against the valiant Negro people of the South who have risen for their freedom. All humanity demands that the full powers of the Federal Government be unstintingly and immediately brought into action on the side of the realization of the just demands of the Negro people for the total eradication of the anti-human segregation and discrimination system in the South and throughout the nation.

In this connection, we can but welcome the news out of Washington that the President is readying new civil rights legislation designed to wipe out racial barriers in public facilities and to empower the Department of Justice to accelerate the desegregation of the schools. A vigorous fight for the prompt enactment by Congress of such legislation on the part of the Administration would contribute importantly to securing the long-deferred equal rights of the 20 million American citizens who are Negro.

But, in the meantime, thousands of Negro fighters for democracy and human dignity are jammed into the jails throughout the South.

The city officials of Jackson have learned nothing from Birmingham except to repeat the crimes of Bull Connor on a grander scale. Today there is hardly a city or town in the South that is not a battle ground in the struggle against the dehumanizing segregation system. While correctly making a legislative fight to secure from Congress new enabling laws, the President and the Attorney General must proceed to use the already ample powers at their command to bring to justice the willful violators of the Constitutional rights of the Negro citizens, and to nullify



the outrageous sentences of imprisonment that have been meted out to the heroic fighters who have dared to assert their rights in defiance of the lawless Jim Crow state and city codes and ordinances.

We have entered a phase in the democratic struggle which calls for an all-out fight to destroy the segregation-racial discrimination system, root and branch. Let each one take his place in this battle and man his post with honor until the victory is won.

June 1963

### **A Tribute in Tears and a Thrust for Freedom**

Over 4,000 of his friends, neighbors and fighters in the cause, had crowded into every available space of the gymnasium-like hall of the Negro Masonic Temple Building on Lynch Street, in Jackson, Miss., by 10:15 a.m. for the funeral service for Medgar W. Evers, leader of the Mississippi Negroes' freedom fight who was slain by an assassin's bullet on June 12th. The service had been scheduled for 11:30 a.m., last Saturday, June 15th.

On the platform facing the silent and reverent audience of mourners sat Roy Wilkins, the executive secretary of the NAACP; Dr. Ralph J. Bunche, Under-Secretary of the United Nations; Congressman Charles Diggs of Michigan; George Biddle, President of Tougaloo College; Clarence Mitchell, legislative secretary of the NAACP, and several Jackson clergymen. Seated in the center of the first row in the audience was the widow of the martyred leader, Mrs. Myralie Evers with two of her three children—Darrell Kenyatta, 9, and Rena Denise, 8; Medgar's brother Charles Evers and other members of the family. To the left of the family group, near the front of the audience, the Rev. Martin Luther King, Rev. Abernathy, Rev. Lawrence and Rev. Wyatt Tee Walker were seated with a full delegation from the leadership of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Other delegations were present—from CORE, headed by its executive officer James Farmer; from the veterans' organization (AVC). Some fifty prominent personalities from throughout the country could be identified

in the vast crowd, including Dick Gregory, the celebrated "message comedian", Roy Reuther of the United Automobile Workers; and Daisy Bates, heroine of the Battle of Little Rock.

An associate of Medgar Evers in earlier struggles in Mount Bayou and elsewhere in Mississippi, Dr. T.R.M. Howard, was the first speaker to pay a secular tribute to the foully murdered leader.

Dr. Howard invoked the Biblical quotation that "without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sins" to serve warning on the minions of the law in Mississippi to stop murdering and torturing its Negro citizens. "For over a hundred years now, we have been turning first one and then the other cheek. Our neck has gotten tired of turning now!" he said to the accompaniment of a great roar of shouted approvals from the mourners, "We aren't going to absorb many more of their blows," he said. Dr. Howard likened Evers to the sainted John Brown and said he would live in history alongside the name of the old martyr of the anti-slavery struggle.

Roy Wilkins' funeral oration articulated the anger, and the unextinguishable and not to be denied resolve of the 20 million Negro Americans to secure now their full and uncircumscribed rights. He identified the segregation system and the ruling powers in the nation who have for so long failed to act to end it as the forces behind the madman who fired the assassination shot.

Roy Wilkins declared that: "The lurking assassin at midnight June 11-12 pulled the trigger, but in all wars the men who do the shooting are trained and indoctrinated and keyed to action. The Southern political system put him behind that rifle; the lily-white Southern governments, local and state; the senators, governors, state legislators, mayors, judges, sheriffs, chiefs of police, commissioners, etc. Not content with mere disfranchisement, the office holders have used unbridled political power to fabricate a maze of laws, customs and economic practices which has imprisoned the Negro.

"Speaking of the public school decision of 1954 of the United States Supreme Court, Senator James O. Eastland told a 1955 Senatobia, Miss., audience: 'You are obligated to DISOBEY such a Court.'



"In far-away Washington, the Southern system has its outposts in the Congress of the United States and by their deals and maneuvers they helped put the man behind the deadly rifle on Guynes Street this week. Then Killer must have felt that he had, if not an immunity, then certainly a protection for whatever he chose to do, no matter how dastardly.

"The opposition has been reduced to clubs, guns, hoses, dogs, garbage trucks and hog wire compounds. But obviously, nothing can stop the drive for freedom. It will not cease here or elsewhere. After a hundred years of waiting and suffering, we are determined, in Baldwin<sup>1</sup> language, 'not upon a bigger cage, but upon no cage at all'."

Wilkins' speech concluded the funeral services which lasted less than an hour. Then the great crowd of mourners calmly flowed through the single exit of the big hall onto Lynch Street. There, joined by several thousand other Negroes and some two score of white crusaders against racist persecution, a funeral cortege shaped up. With his stoic, infinitely brave and undaunted widow in line and alone, a few paces behind the white hearse bearing the remains of Medgar Evers, a vast army of freedom fighter veterans fell in formation, four abreast to wend their way, in a twenty-block-long column throughout the length of Jackson, in a mile and a half silent march.

The march, which began on the street which bears the name of John R. Lynch, the Negro statesman who was Speaker of the House in the Mississippi State Assembly during the Reconstruction years, ended at the Negro business district.

Roy Wilkins and the Rev. Martin Luther King, Dick Gregory and other famous names in the freedom struggle of America's Negroes composed the front ranks of the marchers.

I was there and marched in the front ranks of the contingent of uniformed Elks.<sup>2</sup> The temperature was 103

<sup>1</sup> James Baldwin—an outstanding contemporary Negro novelist in the U.S., an active participant in the struggle for U.S. Negro rights.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks—a charitable and social association founded in 1868.—Ed.

degrees but I saw no one fall out of rank in the long walk under a merciless sun.

Only for the occasion of this sacred tribute to the dead had the Mayor lifted his edict against "Negroes congregating, demonstrating, or indulging in any public manifestations whatsoever". And the terms of this march were that it had to be totally silent, along the specified police-patrolled route, and promptly ended with the crowd dispersed by 2:00 p.m. that day.

But in the aftermath of this moving silent processional, a spontaneous demonstration of revolutionary explosiveness occurred. An event from which the racist police regime of Jackson is not likely to recover. I saw frail-bodied school-girls, with blazing honey-brown faces, and with hands bare of weapons charge fearlessly into a phalanx of helmeted police with raised riot-guns. I saw Angels storming into the defenders of the bastions of Hell, Mississippi, that is.

June 1963

### **Brave Youths Defy Police Guns, Dogs and Jails**

Between noon and 2 p.m. Saturday, June 15, the city of Jackson, Miss., had fairly come to a standstill. For a fourth of the Negro population, in serried ranks that stretched out for 20 blocks, was marching through Jackson behind the white hearse that bore the bullet-punctured body of their beloved leader—Medgar W. Evers, the NAACP field secretary for Mississippi slain by an assassin's bullet in the early morning hours on June 12.

All business establishments along the route of march were closed or shuttered. All cross-traffic had come to a stop. As the silent cortege moved through the "white" part of town in measured step, I watched, as I walked, the faces of the white citizens who sat in their cars at the intersections, who formed clusters in the windows of stores and dwellings on either side of the concrete-surfaced street along which we marched, or who gathered in little clusters at the corners and in front of taverns.

But for the most part, the faces I saw bore a grim and troubled countenance. One could identify the expressions of fear, of hate, of bewilderment and startled disbelief.



Also, I could see etched in the faces of some, lines of compassion and sorrow, and there were heads inclined downward at an angle of shame and embarrassment. The white on-lookers for the most part were as silent and apparently reflective as were the close-ranked columns of Negro marchers.

Nor were the Negroes marching alone. For integrated in their ranks was a small representation, a score or more of those millions of white Americans who are increasingly coming to see their own identity with the Negro's struggle for justice.

The Mayor had imposed brutal conditions for the funeral procession. Among the stipulations was one prohibiting any singing or shouting of slogans. Two blocks from the terminal point of the mile and a half processional, subdued voices began to raise a song in protest which rolled gently along the whole length of the marching column.

It was the modern version of the old spiritual from the days of slavery—"We Shall Overcome, Some Day". The steel-helmeted, jack-booted police, with their heavy pistols slung low on their hips, pounded their clubs in their hands and shifted nervously from foot to foot but made no move to interfere. After all, the march had reached its end, the 2:00 witching hour was only minutes away and the "off the streets" curfew would soon be back in force.

The funeral march was over. Thousands of mourners milled about the Collins Funeral Home on North Farish Street which held the remains of Medgar Evers. Somehow there was comfort in the con-fraternity of the crowd of one's friends, colleagues, kinsmen.

No one was in a mood to rush away to the chores of a Saturday evening household. Especially when one carries within oneself the iron weight of knowledge that "the law" commands that you, a Negro, must get off of the streets and into your own house.

Then it was that I heard it. The soft soprano voice rising above the sounds of the throng, caroling the words to the tune that has become a kind of anthem of the freedom marchers, "Oh Freedom; Oh, Oh Freedom! Before I be a slave, I'll be buried in my grave. . . ."

The song was coming from the half-opened mouth of a little slip of a girl maybe five feet tall but not quite a hun-

dred pounds, whose skin had the soft-brown color of honey; whose eyes now flashed wide and brown pupiled, then closed tight in the prayerful ecstasy of the resolution of the words of her song. She kept the beat of her song by patting the fingers of one hand into the palm of the other.

The people opened a circle of space for her. And into the circle came first one then another young woman of her own late 'teen or early 20's age group.

As the volume of song rose, the circle enlarged and in the circle had now come several young men to join the chorus. Those in the outer ring of the circle were now joining in the singing and vigorously clapping out the beat. Soon the singing crowd had fully covered the street from sidewalk to sidewalk.

Hundreds of voices were now raised full and loud in the familiar freedom songs and the little slip of a girl was the mover and shaker of them all. She never gave a verbal command but she converted that crowd into a well disciplined chorus, commanding them through the gestures of a master-pantomimist: a roll of the eye, a pout of the lips, a smile, a shrug of the shoulders, an exaggerated pat of the foot.

Suddenly she raised both hands aloft, and the crowd now hundreds deep, fell instantly silent. She cocked her head to the side, rolled her eyes toward her colleagues and with a half-secretive but all-knowing smile, began a new song.

The words I heard were: "This little light of mine, it is going to shine; oh, it is going to shine."

A roar of identifying applause came from the crowd and a thousand voices joined in the chorus of "This little light of mine. . . ." The verses were improvised by volunteer soloists taking the initiative in rounds, and all came in on the chorus.

At this point a police car bearing the Chief himself edged into the crowd who opened a passageway. The young people who constituted the inner ring of the crowd pointed their fingers like so many searchlights at the police as they fairly shouted their verses which called for freedom and the clean-out of segregation.

Someone ad-libbed a verse that said "we want the killers of Evers" and the little girl in the center of the ring



gracefully arched her thin arm and pointing finger in the direction of Capital Street. Capital Street crosses Farish at the top of a rise. It demarcates the division between the two worlds, it separates the "colored" part of town from the "white". There at the crest of the knoll where Farish Street climbs up to Capital was the phalanx of the blue steel-helmeted police with riot-guns at the ready.

The rhythmic pace of "This little light of mine" beat faster and firmer. Now hundred of arching arms pointed to the police at the top of the incline.

A voice in the crowd said: "What are we waiting for?" And the little slip of a girl answered back: "Well, all right, then!" She made a halfturn and stepped toward the top of the hill, with a kind of dance step that was neither walking nor running.

The other young men and girls in the crowd formed an eight-abreast line behind her, and, before you could sing out, "This little light of mine", there were some 600 youth and grown people and old people marching toward the top of the hill, and the shouted chant of "FREEDOM! FREEDOM!" filled the canyon of Farish Street.

As the singing and chanting crowd, with that daring youth guard in its van, approached the line of police, a squad of six motorcycles raced down the hill into the crowd. But the surging mass of demonstrators never broke their pace, they opened channels for the motorcycles and kept forging ahead.

I could hear the screams of the sirens, and the frantic clang of fire-engine bells. Canvas-covered army transports roared into view. They were followed by the tinny clatter of the garbage trucks which Jackson's police use as an inventive piece of cruelty to haul demonstrators to the concentration camp-style prison.

With the first ranks of the demonstrators only a half block from the crest of the hill, the police, now re-enforced by 200 State Troopers, charged down upon them, indiscriminately battering and slashing the front ranks with the butts of their rifles and submachine guns. Along the sidewalks came two columns of police with drawn pistols and flaying clubs.

I saw a middle-aged woman belabored by a club-wielding policeman until she fell unconscious to the ground. He

then grabbed her by the hair and dragged her to the nearest garbage truck where he hoisted her to his shoulders and dumped her in as though he were handling a sack of potatoes.

I saw the wife of a paraplegic veteran of the Korean War beaten to the ground, then battered by the clubs of three policemen before being bodily lifted and thrown into a garbage truck. Her only offense had been that she had not pushed her wheel-chair-ridden husband fast enough in the direction that the police had demanded.

The Negro demonstrators retreated before the wild charge of the police who were cursing like maniacs and letting out frenzied Confederate army "Rebel yells".

The dogs arrived and were given full freedom of the length of their leashes. One opened a long gash on the leg of a woman whose dress had been already half-torn from her body and who was leaning against a door sill, trying to wipe the blood and dust from her eyes, when the dog lunged upon her.

A distance of several yards had opened between the police phalanx and the demonstrators when, from the roofs and the sides of the buildings came volley after volley of "Coke" bottles and rocks which shattered on the pavement, or caromed off of the steel helmets of the police barbarians. Some dropped their rifles as they fled for cover. Others cursed and some screamed in pain.

But now, from the bottom of Farish Street came a second phalanx of police. The demonstrators retreated into nearby houses and some stores and blended into the sidewalk crowds.

The police grappled with, and beat, and dragged scores of people off the porches, out of windows, off of the sidewalks, until the garbage trucks had their cargoes, and the canvas-covered army transport vehicles were crowded.

The heroic demonstrators were transported to the newly improvised concentration camp which has been pressed into service; the jails have been long-since filled with the victims of the rampant racist reign of terror here.

I saw this concentration camp at Jackson. The hundreds of Negro youth and white adults, men and women, are kept in the corrugated quonset exhibition pens used to house livestock during state and county fairs.



The sun, beating down on the metal buildings, built up an oven-like temperature inside. The only toilet facilities are slit trenches which accommodated the needs of the cattle. There are two hose pipes, to provide all the water for any purpose, accessible to the prisoners who now number over 900, the youngest being less than eight years old.

Each quonset building is surrounded by barbed "pig wire".

One wouldn't know that such barbarities are going on at the Fair Grounds, for at a distance the eye is drawn to a huge carousel-like building with candy stripe painted surface and rolling tre-terraced grounds.

The radio reported that only 27 people were "officially" arrested on this day; the others were detained without charges, then released. Another 17 were admitted for hospitalization for gaping wounds and internal injuries sustained from police weapons.

June 1963

### **The Challenge of a Fortress of Segregation: What Is To Be Done!**

Saturday, June the 15th, was a day in Jackson, Miss., that began in sorrow and mourning for the martyr, Medgar Evers, but it ended on a note of triumph. For in Jackson in the afternoon of Saturday, a demonstration of explosive expressiveness occurred on North Farish Street near Capital, a tableau of poetic courage and a glorious manifestation of the unconquerable will of the Negro masses of the Southland to gain the freedom goals for which Medgar Evers and so many others have given their lives.

I saw a great crowd of kinsmen charge into the solid ranks of steel-helmeted police gunmen with clenched fists upraised and defiant shouts of "FREEDOM NOW" roaring from their throats. I saw our glorious youth in the front ranks of the suffering demonstrators with that nameless Saint Joan in the lead. I saw a people manifest their will to secure their rights now, no matter the costs, no matter the odds, no matter the sacrifice. I saw a people in massed struggle who had come to a consensus that life cannot be lived any longer in the old ways. I saw a people's rising for freedom, a people who have lost their fear.

To experience such a day as this, in Jackson, Mississippi, is to know in all of its dimensions, what the mortally wounded beast of the old order has determinedly resolved. That is, that Jackson in particular, and Mississippi in general are first among the chosen places in the South, where the forces of white supremacy and the incorrigible profiteers in Negro oppression and deprivation have fortified themselves for a desperate last stand against the mighty popular offensive for the desegregation and democratization of the South.

There are other place-names in the South whose infamy is associated with the fact that they are garrison cities in the grip of lost battalions of the historically beaten legions of the white supremacists.

Hard-fisted cliques of racist politicians rely upon the clubs and guns of utterly declassed and dehumanized bands of police mobsters to beat back the inexorable tides of social change in such cities as Gadsden, Alabama; Danville, Virginia; and Albany, Georgia. While in such states as Alabama and Mississippi, the power remains still in the hands of such blatant Negro-haters and fascist-minded ultra-reactionaries as a George Wallace and a Ross Barnett.

These die-hard bastions of rebel resistance to the laws of the land, the rights of the Negro people, and the will of the nation, such as Jackson, Mississippi, pose a special challenge and problem to the vital new crusade for Negro freedom which is abroad in our land.

The general offensive for freedom and equality on the part of the Negro masses of the South began in earnest with the Montgomery, Alabama, Bus Boycott in 1957.

Since then the movement of direct mass action has continued to develop with irresistible force. Great struggles have been waged in Little Rock, Nashville, Tuscaloosa, Oxford, Albany, Birmingham, Atlanta, Greensboro, Gadsden, Jackson, Cambridge and a number of other cities.

These struggles have engaged hundreds of thousands of Negroes and numerous white supporters in direct assaults upon various features of the segregation system in the South.

In these battles the NAACP, SCLC, CORE, SNCC and a number of local organizations have provided organizational channels and leadership for this general uprising of the



Negro masses against all manner of slavery-like restrictions which the brutal system imposes.

Under the inspiration and pressure of the masses, old leaders have gained new militancy and dedication and numerous creative and talented new leaders have come to the front ranks of the masses in the heat of battle.

The heroic mass struggles of the Negro people have a profound impact upon our nation. The President has been compelled to heed their proclamation and has responded with a vigorous message to Congress calling for the urgent enactment of a Civil Rights Act of 1963 designed to legally secure to the Negro people the full measure of their citizenship rights and to outlaw segregation and discrimination patterns in the life of the nation.

But the willful defenders of segregation and Negro oppression have taken up positions of defiance and bloody resistance in such fortresses of white supremacy as Jackson, Miss.

To occupy these fortresses, to bring down the ramparts of these racist strong-points will require a well coordinated combined attack in which all the popular organizations of freedom-loving Americans must take part.

Would it not be a good thing to convene a national consultation of all the heads of participating organizations in the Negro people's freedom struggle, to elaborate a common battle plan for launching a combined operation for reducing the last remaining bastions of bigotry in the South—such as is represented by Jackson, Miss.?

It will be necessary in such a place as Jackson, Miss., to sever the police arm from the ruling body of racist reactionaries who are defying the Federal authority and it will be necessary to organize the defense of the lives and liberties of the protesting victims of racism with the aid and full authority of the Federal police power.

It may be necessary to supplement the economic boycott and mass public protest demonstrations with a version of an economic general strike: and extended work-holiday on the part of the Negro toilers and their white supporters until substantial steps are taken to break the segregation chains.

An intensive campaign of explanation, of missionary canvassing among the white youth, trade unionists, church

people, teachers and professionals will need to be carried through in conformation with a general plan which would draw on the new commitments of the National Council of Churches, the United Auto Workers, and other national organizations who have expressed their resolve to join in the crusade to bring the civil rights revolution to a speedy victory.

Furthermore, in addition to pressure being kept upon the Government to enforce and secure the right of Negro citizens, the Attorney General must be prevailed upon to take legal initiatives to bring such enemies of the nation as Ross Barnett, Governor George Wallace and Al Lingo before the bar of justice and to prosecute such racist organizations as the KKK and the White Citizens Councils. James O. Eastland's occupancy of a seat in the U.S. Senate should be challenged.

But in addition to these measures, the influence of the Government should be brought into play to cause the location of new mass-employment plants in such cities as Jackson, Miss., and Cambridge, Maryland, and Danville, Virginia. Such new factories would be under the obligation of the Federal Government to employ Negroes in all job classifications on a strictly non-segregated and non-discriminatory basis.

Both the new pattern in the working force of such plants and in the life of the union in them, would be consciously ordered to serve as models and illustrations of the advantages of a non-discriminatory way of life which could benefit mutually all Southern workers—Negro and white.

In any event, the bastions of bigotry, the cesspools of segregation and anti-Negro violence, such as Jackson, Miss., must and will be cleared away. The Negro people demand it, the national interest requires it, and the forces are strong enough and in line to bring it about.

July 21, 1963

### Jim Crow and Red Herring

As seldom before in our history, the conscience of the vast majority of the people of our nation has been awakened to the enormity of the crimes of racism which have been committed against Negro citizens.



The great struggles of the Negro people for equality and freedom which are sweeping across the whole country have exposed the shameful practices of the white supremacists before the accusing eyes of the whole world.

Condemned and isolated by public opinion, confronting the popular mandate on Congress for the enactment of a forceful Civil Rights Act of 1963, the discredited Dixiecrats and their racist counterparts of the North are striving to stay the inevitability of their political execution by resort to desperate measures.

In a number of places their police forces are stepping up the arrests of, and brutality against, Negro and white demonstrators against segregation and discrimination. In the Bronx, as in several situations in the South, there have appeared on the scene outright fascist gangs under the leadership of the nazi-like National Renaissance Party.

Now come the South's high priests of racial prejudice—Mississippi's Ross Barnett and Alabama's George Wallace—pouring forth vile slanders against the Communist Party in the Congressional committee rooms.

They have gone beyond the most frenetic flights of the mad McCarthy in labeling, as "captives of the Communists", President Kennedy, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, Rev. Martin Luther King and all of the nearly million American churchmen, trade unionists, youth, women and businessmen, artists and professional people, Negro and white, who have come out for the enactment of effective new legislation for outlawing all manner of segregation and discrimination in the life of the country.

As always, so in their case, red baiting and anti-Communist hysteria are the last desperate refuge of the scoundrel. This effort to represent as a "scheme for Communist take-over" the revolutionary upsurge of the Negro people to secure their long-denied democratic and *Constitutional* rights will not save them.

Their ignorant labeling of the whole Negro people's movement for integration in the life of the nation on a basis of equality as the "work of the Communists" will appear to thoughtful people as a back-handed tribute to the role of the Communists in the fight for human rights and justice.

While it is a ridiculous affront to the intelligence of

people for the racist reactionaries to mock at a Kennedy or a King by reference to them as "Communist" or "Communist controlled", there is truth in the implication that the Communists have a shining record in the struggle for the rights of the Negro people.

*The selfless, and often pioneering role of the Communists in the struggle for the freedom and equal rights of the Negro people is unmatched by the members of any other political party in American life. The Communists, Negro and white, set a standard of leadership and service in the fight for the just rights of the Negro people that is only now being matched by numerous other forces and organizations.*

It was the Communists in the International Labor Defense who first made the issue of Scottsboro and the Jim Crow oppression of Negro Americans a cause that rang around the world. It was the Communists in the trade unions who raised the banner of struggle against racist exclusion practices and discrimination in employment. It was the Communists who were foremost among the organizers of the unorganized workers and sharecroppers in the South in the CIO's pioneering days. It was the young Communists who lit torches of hope and led exemplary struggles of the World War II generation for jobs and voting rights.

*Indeed, in the entire phase of the modern history of the Negro freedom struggle, the Communists have always played, and always will play, an honorable and dedicated role. The Communist Party of the U.S. wholeheartedly and selflessly supports the just struggle of the Negro people for freedom and integration in the political, economic and social life of the nation.*

As Gus Hall wrote in *The Worker*, June 23, 1963: "Victory of the Negro people for full and equal citizenship will change everything for the better in our nation; it will open the way to rapid developments along the whole front of social progress in our country."

June 28-July 5, 1964

### **A Horrible Lynching**

The curtain has been raised on the tragic drama that is every man's life in this benighted state whose society is



a form of racist cannibalism. Mississippi is revealed as another South Africa set down in our midst. But terrible has been the price of admission to this theatre of horror that is Mississippi. It has been paid in the lives of the finest sons—Negro and white—of the young generation.

A charred automobile, mired in a lonely swamp, bore silent witness to the horror that is Mississippi today. Three young people, with faith in their country and love of humanity filling their hearts, only a few hours earlier had filled that automobile with the sound of their hopes and dreams of a better world for all people.

But that burned automobile is empty now of the eager voices of James E. Chaney, young Negro plasterer from Meridian, Miss. and Michael Schwerner, 24-year-old white social worker from New York, and Andrew Goodman, young white Queens College student from New York.

These three young heroes of the 1964 Summer Project<sup>1</sup> in Mississippi were lynched, tortured to death, and their bodies incinerated there in Philadelphia, Mississippi. And the sheriff and deputy sheriff were no uninformed strangers to the men who did the actual torch-lynchings. They were direct accomplices in this horrible crime.

The youth of our nation have taken the names and memories of the three youthful freedom fighters into their hearts. En masse they have taken up the banner of their cause as the most noble purpose in their lives. By the hundreds, from every state in the Union, young people, Negro and white, are converging on Mississippi to carry on the work of Negro emancipation from racial tyranny, of social reform, and democratic redemption to which they gave up their young lives, those three glorious youths—ANDREW GOODMAN, JAMES CHANEY, MICHAEL SCHWERNER. The American people cry out in anguish against this violation of the flower of the nation's youth by the vicious racists of Mississippi.

The heart of the nation demands that all the force of the Government be called to hunt down the enemies of the country, who perpetrated this most foul of crimes, to make certain such crimes shall not happen again.

<sup>1</sup> A drive for registering Negro voters, initiated in Mississippi by the SNCC.—Ed.

The ultimate responsibility for the terror that engulfed those three brave young American patriots in Mississippi and endangers every decent American rests with those in high position. The guilt lies with Gov. George Wallace of Alabama, who calls for defiance of the law; with Mississippi's Gov. Paul Johnson and Florida's Farris Bryant, who aid and abet the brutal racist despoilers of humanity. The guilt lies with Senator Barry Goldwater, who incited these white supremacists to violence with his speech declaring the Civil Rights Law unconstitutional and his vote against that law. And it lies with all of Goldwater's friends among the treasonous ultra-Right, who advocate violation of the law.

But the guilt lies not only in commission. The FBI has stood by cynically, as the racists scourged the people of the South. And President Johnson, by his vacillation and hesitation in the face of the defiant white-supremacist traitors, has allowed the terror to go on unchecked.

Mississippi's fascist officials, like those of Florida, Alabama and other Southern states, are plotting with brutal subhumans to violate the law of the land with rifle, bomb and flame.

The jackboots of the nazi stormtrooper are echoing through the South now, as the white supremacists seek to maintain their brutal rule over the Negro and white majority of the Southern states.

President Johnson can no longer stand aside, while the lives of millions of Americans are being periled every minute, every second of every day by these evil forces. The President has the law, the authority, the power and the resources to move into Mississippi, Florida and Alabama and the other Southern states, where racist terror is searing the soul of the nation.

Every American eagerly seeks his place in the great army of patriots to destroy once and for all time Jim Crow, segregation and bigotry. Each can help by urging President Johnson to send immediately into Mississippi, Florida, Alabama and other rebellious Southern states all the Federal forces needed to guarantee the safety of their citizens in their daily exercise of their Constitutional rights.

Racist terror must end! Democracy must be won for our nation!



June 30, 1964

## Put Mississippi Under U.S. Rule

The Executive Branch of the Government and its administrative arms have the power to rout the Mississippi racists. The responsibility for protecting the lives and liberties of United States citizens in the exercise of their Constitutional rights, rights so recently reaffirmed by an overwhelming vote of the Congress of the United States for the Civil Rights Bill, rests with President Lyndon B. Johnson and his chief law enforcement administrator Attorney General Robert Kennedy.

All efforts to secure protection from the white supremacy terrorists at the local or state level have been in vain. The official apparatus of the State of Mississippi from the lowliest deputy sheriff to Gov. Paul Johnson, Jr., the state's chief executive, is in open overt conspiracy with the racist mobsters—the assailants and murderers of Negro and white integrationist youths, the church-burners and home-bombers.

The State of Mississippi *as a whole political entity* is in open revolt against all that is meaningful, civilized, and sacred in the compact federation between the sister states that make up this union. Mississippi is an outlaw, a bandit preying upon the liberties and plundering citizens of these United States of their Constitutionally-proclaimed inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The sacred purposes from which the Founders of this Republic formed the United States of America are being desecrated by a maniac mob spirit in Mississippi which the authorities have permitted to stalk throughout the state unchecked.

The horror of these latest events of ravishing racism: the anticipated revelation of the grisly martyrdom of the youths, Chaney, Schwerner, and Goodman, are an irrefutable call for really consequential White House action.

The revolt of Mississippi against the norms of Constitutional government, the continuation of the wholesale violation there of the Constitutional liberties and human rights of Negro citizens and of those white Americans who accord Negroes equal rights make it obligatory that Pres-

ident Lyndon B. Johnson use the powers of his highest executive office to invoke the authority of Article IV, Sec. 4, of the Constitution of the United States and place full Federal Administration over the State of Mississippi.

The demand for President Johnson to take over the administration of the State of Mississippi, remove Gov. Paul B. Johnson, Jr., from office and transfer all local and state enforcement bodies and official institutions to Federal authority was the substance of a resolution adopted unanimously by the board of directors of the NAACP in Washington, D.C., during the meeting of the 55th annual convention of this largest organization of the Negro freedom movement.

The State of Mississippi has committed an unbroken chain of outrages against the dignity and democratic rights of its Negro citizens for the past hundred years. It has proven itself patently incapable of self-correction. It has placed itself outside of the terms of the state-Federal relationship of the Constitution which requires that—"The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican form of government, and shall protect each of them against invasion, and, on the application of the Legislature, or of the Executive (when the Legislature cannot be convened) against domestic violence." (Article IV, Sec. 4.)

Every American with a concern for the nation's welfare and for elementary human rights and justice should support the appeal to the President to use the Federal Government's power to take full control over the rebel state and "restore law and order and protect the life and liberties of all citizens in Mississippi".

July 1964

## Warm Welcome for J. Edgar Hoover in Mississippi

They heard he was coming—the minions of Mississippi's mobs, the cabal who compose the White Citizens Councils, the Kleagles of the Ku Klux Klans, the racist rabble who have enveloped the state in a reign of terror directed against the Negro people striving to be free. They heard J. Edgar Hoover (The Lord of the FBI) was coming, but they didn't



bake a cake, being this was Mississippi, they burned a church in honor of their guest.

And well they might have been in a festive mood over the celebrated presence of Mr. Hoover in "Ole Miss" Country, for it is well-known that under his direction the FBI has an unblemished record of never once having brought to justice a single lyncher, kidnapper assailant, or murderer of a Negro in any Southern state.

In Mississippi, Hoover spent his time fraternizing with the Governor and other officials of the nation's No. 1 police state. He told the press that Mississippi was no more lawless than the rest of the country. He had no word of comfort or reassurance to the victims of unchecked anti-Negro violence, or to the bereaved parents of the martyrs of the Mississippi Summer Project for democracy—Schwerner, Chaney and Goodman.

Lest anybody get any wrong notions that J. Edgar was in Mississippi in the interest of enforcing the Constitution of the United States, let them know that the chief witch-hunter firmly advised the press that the recently beefed-up Jackson bureau of the FBI "will not give protection to civil rights workers". He declared that the FBI was purely "an investigative agency, not a police agency".

It is reported that the salutation of the day among the Ku Klux Klansmen during the Hoover visit was: "Have no fear, Ole J. Edgar is here!"

In the meantime, while J. Edgar Hoover exchanged the latest witticisms with Gov. Paul B. Johnson in Jackson, some 80 miles away in Greenwood the Pleasant Plain Missionary Baptist Church was burned to the ground. And no arrests were made.

When will the Administration come to the long-evident conclusion that J. Edgar Hoover is incapable of solving the criminal racist problem in Mississippi or elsewhere in the South? For indeed he is a part of the problem.

## 7. WHEN HARLEM LASHED BACK

Abused beyond any reasonable cause to endure it any longer, Harlem rose in anger and lashed back at those symbols of her torment which were within her reach.

The police above all were the objects of her wrath. But also, Harlem vented the spleen of her outrage against the gaudily laid-out shop windows of a number of the merchants of Harlem who neither give fair measure nor jobs to the citizens of the community. These merchants of Harlem only sell their wares in Harlem. They do not live there. They have no other interest in Harlem's people save that of the seller to the buyer.

The angry crowds were demonstrating in the streets against the wanton act of the police murder of a 15-year-old Negro schoolboy when the police charged into them with guns firing and clubs flaying. This is how the first of a chain of encounters between the ghettoized Negro communities and the police began on Saturday evening, July 18, 1964, in Harlem, New York.

There soon followed similar upsurges in Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn; Rochester, N.Y., as well as in several places in New Jersey and Connecticut.

What happened and why did it happen? Why are the Harlems lashing back now, after years of oppression and humiliation?

June 7, 1964

### Crime in New York—the Black and White of It

This week in New York the Big City press has been dedicating its front pages and biggest and boldest type to trumpeting tales of terror which raiding bands of Negro



youth are allegedly perpetrating against defenseless white neighborhoods.

Since last Sunday when a group of carousing Negro youth returning from a day at Coney Island went on a rampage of vandalism in a subway coach, the combined news media of press, radio and television have been wildly and fanatically reporting with lurid embellishments every incident of Negro hoodlum conduct.

Every crime of violence in the city is angled into the news reports in such a slant as to suggest an association or origin in "rampaging Negro hoodlumism".

In short, the newspapers have put together a "Negro crime wave" which mounts in fury as it floods out from Harlem with every new edition of newspapers.

The consequence of this week of "crime wave" propaganda in the New York press has been to feed resistance ammunition to all the forces of reaction who are manning the defenses of the far-flung segregationists' line, from the Senate filibuster of the Dixiecrats to the racist pogromists of St. Augustine, Florida, and Canton, Mississippi.

It is not our contention here that hoodlum conduct or acts of vandalism on the part of people, deprived or otherwise, should be made light of and are not anti-social offenses against the community at large. What we are denouncing is the criminally reckless role of the press, police authorities and civic leaders who represent certain spontaneous explosions of misconduct on the part of Negro youth as a "race war" of "Negro terrorists against white people". Or, as Bayard Rustin<sup>1</sup> stated it: "When such acts of hooliganism are carried out by whites it is then called 'juvenile delinquency' and not 'Irish delinquency' or 'Italian delinquency'."

It is the racial angle, the unconcealed appeal to, and airing of, the rawest anti-Negro hatreds and prejudices of the accounts of this manufactured "crime wave" that constitute the clear and present danger to the peace and tranquility of the communities of the city.

<sup>1</sup> A leading fighter for U.S. Negro rights; one of the organizers and leaders of the historic Washington March, August 28, 1963, in which a quarter of a million people (Negroes and whites) took part and which was organized under the slogan "jobs and freedom".—Ed.

Compare the way the newspapers handled the currently publicized delinquency acts of Negro youth, who smashed some windows and staged a general "hurrah" on a subway train, with the way recent outbreaks of white youth delinquency and vandalism were treated:

The headline read: "700 END WILD SPREE HERE; BRAWLS ERUPT." The story unfolded as follows: "A 65-man task force was outmaneuvered by the young revelers who indulged in fist fights and waded through broken liquor bottles. . . . They turned fire hoses on one another, smashed windows, crashed in an elevator door. . . . Out of the windows they threw lamps, ash trays, Gideon Bibles and telephone books. . . . Damages were assessed at \$8,000. . . . Hotel guests cowed behind the locked doors of their rooms and placed frantic calls to the police. . . ."

Who was "making this scene"? Was it another "terror raid by Harlem hoodlums"? No, dear readers; this was not one of those "elemental emotional explosions of hate" which, according to the newspapers, the Negro youth of the slums of New York are given to manifesting. This was indeed an explosion of vandalism by young people in New York City but its perpetrators were from the current crop of upstanding young collegians. This housewrecking performance was put on by a foregathering of student celebrants of St. Patrick's Day. At the Commodore Hotel they rambled and rumbled, having come there from the University of Massachusetts, Brown, Vilanova, Briarcliff, Holy Cross, Princeton and New York University. They were all white and middle-to-upper class kids. The *New York Times* carries the story of *their* vandalism in its issue of Monday, March 16, on page 33.

Then again, there is a barely noticeable item tucked among the ads on page 14 in the March 3 issue of the staid old *Times*. A single column AP story with a Daytona Beach, Fla., dateline states that a new batch of 111 students had been fined \$75 each for hoodlum conduct on the beach—they were tossing girls up in blankets and severely frightening them. The story noted that "since the students gathered 1,400 have been arrested, most on drinking charges". The stories did not hit the front pages of the *Times*, nor did they set off editorial alarms about a "crime wave".



On April 1 of this year, the *New York Times* carried an editorial on teen-age vandalism and hooliganism entitled **BLAST IN BRITAIN**. It said in part: "The similarity between the teen-age British 'mods' and 'rockers' raising hell in Clacton-on-Sea and teen-age American college students having a blast in Daytona Beach is obvious. British or American, they are brothers and sisters under the skin, and they are letting off steam with a senseless destructiveness that craves indulgence even though it is not funny.... They are just 'looking for kicks'." It is always hard to draw valid moral judgments from the eccentricities of succeeding generations of teen-agers. It is normal for them to be abnormal. They would not be sane if they did not do insane things.... The disease from which they suffer has nothing to do with race, color, creed or nationality. There is only one cure for it, which is to grow up...."

This philosophical and indulgent fatherly commentary on the foibles of those teen-agers is in most shocking contrast to the assignment of the most malevolent design to the Negro youth of the slums when on last Sunday some score of them "raised hell" in a subway coach, punched a white youth, and roared out of the subway to knock over garbage cans and break some windows.

In general, the commercial press of the city joined the hysterical call of the Hearst *Journal-American*, which demanded in box car letters across its front page on Tuesday, June 2: **WAR ON HOODLUMISM**.

The first paragraph of its story made it amply clear that the "war" it is calling for is a punitive campaign of police battering, bullying and jailing of the Negro youth of the slums who are facing the long summer corralled in the asphalt jungle of the city without jobs, without the funds for, or access to, further schooling, and without places to go for organized and elevating recreational outlets and cultural expression.

The so-called "crime wave" of Negro youth vandalism has been converted into a veritable tidal wave of anti-Negro incitations and luridly colored inflammatory conjurings from the typewriters of irresponsible hirelings of the journalists' profession like the *Tribune's* Breslin and the *Times'* sensational fabricator of "facts"—about undis-

coverable Mau Mau bands of Negro "Blood Brothers" in Harlem.

This newspaper campaign of infamy and defamation against the Negro people in general and their defenseless and deprived youth of the city slums in particular has cheered the heart of every profiteer and investor in racist privilege, every foe of school, housing and employment desegregation; of every segregationist and arch foe of effective civil rights legislation. The history of the city is replete with numerous examples of an unscrupulous commercial press of huckstering-up and inflaming crisis situations.

Is there a real problem of juvenile delinquency, vandalism, and hoodlumism in the city? Of course there is. *But it is not a racial manifestation*. It is not a question of "those Negroes" or "those Puerto Ricans". It is a question of a city and a society derelict in their social duty. A city which has left its "low income" masses to the mercy of slumlords. Which has failed to balance job opportunity with the population's needs. Which has no adequate network of recreational facilities for its young people. Which has yet to implement an effective plan to eliminate the inequities in educational opportunity afforded the youth of the Harlems of the City.

In the words of the recent report of the City Commission on Human Rights on the incidents of juvenile delinquency among minority groups: "Fierce frustrations build up among a youth hemmed in a community where poverty, unemployment, poor housing and inadequate schooling are the universal norm."

Any honest manifestations of genuine concern about the "delinquency" problem in this or any other city of slums—beside-towering-temples-of-flaunted-affluence call for *real* expenditures of funds and effort in programs to remove the breeding grounds, to rehabilitate the slums, and to enlarge the employment, educational and cultural opportunities of the ghetto's captive inhabitants—youth and adult.

Furthermore, it calls for justice in the case of the 300-year-old crime of segregation and race discrimination against Negro Americans; for the smashing of the filibuster and the immediate enactment of the Civil Rights Bill; for



the enforcement of the Federal and human rights law in Mississippi and elsewhere in the South where millions of Negroes live under conditions of continuous terror at the hands of savage local authorities and racist pogromists. As Roy Wilkins of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People stated it to the press:

*"... Part of the context in which these Negro delinquents are bred is the deep bitterness and frustration which all Negroes feel at the continued denial of equal opportunity everywhere and at the unpunished beatings and killings of Negroes which continue to feature the civil rights scene in the deep South."*

July 1964

### Why Harlem Lashed Back

#### I.

Violence rocked Harlem over the weekend of July 18, 1964. And as usual it was the residents of Harlem who were on the receiving end of the murderous assault upon the community, and as usual it was the erstwhile "defenders of law and order", the police, who shed the Negro people's blood and took the lives of those who died in the encounter.

An invasion army of hundreds of New York police fired thousands of rounds of pistol and shotgun ammunition into this most famous American Negro community in the nation that Saturday night and Sunday evening.

Jay Jenkins, a 41-year-old man who was watching from a roof top the blue-uniformed locusts swarming out from their green hive-like convoys to assault street crowds of Harlemites with flying clubs and bursts of molten bullets from flashing pistols, toppled over dead from a bullet through the skull after Patrolman James Dexter had taken careful aim and squeezed off a single round with an expert sharpshooter's pride of craft.

A hundred other Harlem residents were treated at hospitals for bullet wounds and gaping holes opened in their heads and faces by leaded policemen's billies. Several children and old people also were hospitalized; they had fallen under the wheels of the racing police patrol cars

which caromed through the crowded streets like wild deer in an open field.

When pallbearers, the relatives and schoolmates of 15-year-old James Powell, were bearing the coffin from the funeral parlor to the waiting hearse on 7th Avenue near 132nd Street, a sustained chatter of pistol-firing broke the reverent silence of the funeral occasion. The mood of the bare-headed Sunday crowd of over a thousand mourners turned from deep sorrow to terror and then to outrage.

Swaggering patrols of white-helmeted police charged into the mourners shoulder-to-shoulder like a line of a football team on the offensive after the ball has been snapped.

The cops shouted racist epithets and cursed at the top of their lungs while they fired off their pistols just over the heads of their victims, all the while flaying the people indiscriminately with their clubs.

The weekend of violence in Harlem was the latest in an unrelieved campaign of 30 years of violence against Harlem. Indeed, as Dr. Kenneth Clark reminds us with poignant words, "Harlem is a product of violence and its existence is a symbol of inhumanity and injustice."

Dr. Kenneth Clark has said, "The frightening horror of Harlem is the chronic day-to-day quiet violence to the human spirit which exists and is accepted as normal." That is, the violence of deep deprivation of the people of Harlem of elementary norms of safe or sanitary—not to speak of adequate—housing, of minimal economic rights to a fair share of jobs, of health services, of relief from the blight of scandalously inferior educational opportunities.

"Harlem," said Dr. Clark, "is a ghetto wherein human beings are confined and are exploited because they cannot escape. Harlem is a racial colony within the most liberal, cosmopolitan and sophisticated city of our nation."

The violence that the police of Commissioner Murphy's command have carried out in Harlem, by accident or design, is in precise accord with the call of Republican Party presidential nominee Barry Goldwater who demanded more police toughness to make the street safe.

It is no accident that Barry Goldwater is inciting the passions and hatreds of already unstable and prejudiced citizens and police officers, because such is his stock-in-



trade of political propaganda, such is the pattern for divide-to-rule that he hopes to weave into a carpet that will lead him to the White House and the nation to fascism.

The real violence in the streets, as Clark pointed out in his perceptive piece in the *Herald-Tribune* last Monday, was put there by "racism—whether it is found in Mississippi, Alabama, Arizona or New York City". Furthermore, he said, "The life of a Negro is as meaningless to some of the police in New York City as it is to the sheriffs of rural Mississippi. . . . A stable and just society cannot mount a successful offensive against Negro youth who kick out subway windows and at the same time plead that it is powerless to protect Negro and white youths who are being murdered because they seek to make American democracy a reality. . . .

"Each time that a Negro church is bombed, or burnt, that is violence in our streets.

"Each time a Negro body is found in a swamp in Mississippi that is violence in our land.

"Each time white and Negro civil rights workers cannot be protected by our Government, that is anarchy.

"Each time a police officer shoots and kills a Negro teen-ager, that is urban crime."

The reality of their experience is conditioning Negro youth "in New York City and in Jackson, Miss., to view police and law enforcement officers not as protectors, but as adversaries who are zealous in seeking to maintain the racial status quo as are the most ardent segregationists".

It is evident that three things must be done at once in respect to the violence that was visited upon Harlem by Murphy's Gestapo:

1. End the police occupation of Harlem at once. The normal police contingent of officers in Harlem should be largely composed of Negro policemen who are residents of the area.

2. Police Commissioner Murphy must be promptly replaced by a man of more social vision and capable of commanding the confidence of all the communities of the metropolis.

3. The citizens board of review to act against offenses of the police against the rights of citizens must be established with adequate authority.

Besides that a total and comprehensive program—encompassing questions of jobs, education and recreational facilities, health services and housing—for an investment of two to five billion dollars, a program designed to efface the blight from the Harlem community within the span of a five-year plan, should be undertaken as a joint city-state-Federal program.

And, of course, the criminals at large, in uniform of police, who are guilty of murdering a schoolboy and a bystander in cold blood must be brought to justice and given the full penalty of the law.

## II.

In a recent statement President Johnson made a welcome affirmation of the truth that "American citizens have a right to protection of life and limb—whether driving along a highway in Georgia; a road in Mississippi; or a street in New York City".

The President sternly declared that "violence and lawlessness cannot, must not, and will not be tolerated". Although referring to Mississippi and Georgia in his statement, the focus of his remarks was upon the current crisis in connection with the police vs. the Negro community in New York's Harlem.

While welcoming the assurances of the President that New York would "have all the help that we can give . . . and this includes help in correcting the evil social conditions that breed despair and disorder", leading Harlem spokesmen were less than sanguine about the President's announcement that he was directing J. Edgar Hoover to institute an FBI investigation of the situation on the explosive Harlem scene.

They recall that J. Edgar Hoover has recently returned from a purported investigating excursion into Mississippi in connection with the wave of terror against the civil rights workers and Negro people which burst into the headlines when three youths disappeared under circumstances pointing to their having been lynched near Philadelphia, Miss.; and that while there he fraternized with the racists, gave assurances to the press that all was well,



and uncovered no evidence to bring a single sheriff, police officer, or segregationist racist to justice.

They are mindful of the fact that in the entire history of his command of the FBI J. Edgar Hoover has never discovered a single lyncher or perpetrator of a racist crime against a Negro notwithstanding the thousands of lynch-murders that have occurred during his reign as the nation's top cop. It is also well known that J. Edgar Hoover is the "living doll" of the John Birch Society, and one of the few men in the Administration whom Senator Goldwater counts as a true patriot and "his kind of man".

It is not "more and badder" police that is indicated to relieve the social malaise of Harlem. Indeed, it is the offense to the community represented by the virtual occupation of the area by hundreds of riot-squad, helmeted police which is no small part of the problem and of the oppression of the people of Harlem.

What Harlem needs is, in the words of the President, "help in correcting the evil social conditions that breed despair and disorder".

This help must take the form of a massive program in the areas of rehousing the ill-housed, mass education in skills for modern employment of the underemployed and the unemployed: it requires a development program for tens of thousands of new jobs inside and outside of the community through an influx of business and industrial establishments.

Furthermore, Harlem needs a great expansion of city services as garbage collection, rodent extermination, as well as the expansion of park and playground and swimming pool and recreational centers and hospital and medical clinic facilities.

It is hardly an accidental circumstance that, the very day that President Johnson released his statement announcing that J. Edgar Hoover was going to investigate the situation in Harlem, acting Mayor Paul R. Screvane sought to divert growing public indignation against the New York Police Commissioner Michael J. Murphy with lying accusations that the "disorders" in Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant were the handiwork of some sort of "infiltrators" from the Communist Party.

The whole nation has had a look at the Harlem scene

through the television cameras. The whole world knows that the real and continuing provokers of the wrath of the Negro masses of Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant are precisely the police under the command of Commissioner Murphy.

It was the trigger-happy policeman, Thomas Gilligan, who shot down in cold blood 15-year-old schoolboy James Powell which brought the masses of Negro and justice-loving white New Yorkers into the streets in giant protest rallies.

It is the continuing denial of justice against the crimes of the police and the unrelieved violence of the police against the people of Harlem which are keeping the people in the streets in wave after wave of protest actions.

It is Commissioner Murphy who gave the orders to use the unprecedented method of firing live ammunition just over the heads of crowds of people to "clear the streets". Neither Paul Screvane nor J. Edgar Hoover will succeed in wiping the blood from the hands of the commissioner and his guilty police by the manufacture out of whole cloth of some "Communist-did-it", Red Scare, witchhunt.

The people are in no mood to listen to such monstrous lies when the streets of New York are ringing with the angry cries of thousands for JUSTICE and relief from the deprivations of the police.

The Communists are and always will be partisans at the side of the oppressed people in battle for justice, equality and the implementation of their Constitutional liberties. The Communists do not advocate, and never have advocated, the resort to acts of individual terror, vengeance or violence. The Communists are foremost in their assumption of responsibility in the daily struggles of the people for the satisfaction of their economic, political and social needs and they make vital contributions in helping to define the most responsible and effective pathways to victory in all circumstances. The Communists are opposed to all stunts, adventuristic schemes, or anarchistic acts which can only divert the minds and energies of the masses of the people from the significant social issues at stake and operate to undermine the unity of the Negro people with the masses of fair minded white citizens.

It is well known that the police often seek to cover their



own crimes against the rights of the people with the acts of police agents-provocateurs which they infiltrate into the organizations of the people. The New York City police have a big and infamous organization of undercover police agents which operate in the labor and people's movements under the code name of BOSS (Bureau of Special Services).

The nation requires, and the Negro people demand, that peace be secured to Harlem through the establishment of justice and not on the basis of a diversionary frameup of fighters and champions of the rights of the Negro people. The officials in New York must be taught a lesson by the indignation of the people over Screvane's lying charge against the Communists. They must come to see that this is the thorny path laid out by Barry Goldwater, the path along which he plots to carry himself to the White House and the nation into captivity of the ultra-Right advocates of fascist repression at home and military adventures abroad.

"Today, extra police stand guard on the corners and mounted patrolmen ride through the streets of Harlem.... To the citizens of Harlem they (the police) symbolize the answer of the city authorities to their protest.... To Harlem this show of force simply signifies that property will be protected at any cost; but it offers no assurance that the legitimate demands of the citizens of the community for work and decent living conditions will be heeded. Hence, this show of force only tends to make the conditions which were responsible for the occurrence last March 19 more irritating. And so long as these conditions persist, no one knows when they will lead to recurrence, with possibly greater violence, of the happenings of that night."

This quotation is taken from the Report of the Mayor's Commission on Conditions in Harlem, released for publication Saturday, July 18, 1936. The very same day—July 18, Saturday—28 years later the current outbreak occurred in Harlem.

The chairman of that Commission was Dr. Charles H. Roberts, a prominent Harlem physician; Dr. E. Franklin Frazier of Howard University served the Commission as director of surveys and research. Prominent in the recommendations of the Commission was this: "A citizens' committee to hear citizens' complaints against the police."

## III.

It was in Rochester over the weekend as it had been in Harlem the week before, an act of wanton brutality by a policeman that inflamed the long-smouldering wrath of the Negro community.

Last Friday night, Saturday morning, and again during Saturday evening, an estimated 2,000 Negroes battled the police with their bare fists, and such missiles as came to hand from the gutters and ash cans of the streets—bricks, soft drink bottles, garbage can tops.

Rochester has a police force of some 500 heavily armed and mobile men. They were reinforced by a contingent of 100 state troopers and additional policemen from the nearby towns. Firemen were also commandeered for police duty. The police sealed off areas of the city where the bulk of the 35,000 Negro citizens live, barring all traffic in or out of the ghettos by car or by foot.

Enraged by the action of the beefed-up police force which imprisoned the entire Negro community behind barricades and herded its people about like so many cattle, the long fuse of the people's patience had burned up at last and ignited the pent-up dynamite of hatred of the symbols of their humiliation, and of their deprivation of dignity, civil rights, and equitable living conditions. Crowds of young Negroes vented their deep anger at the steel-helmeted police (they turned over and burned Police Chief William Lombard's car, even)—and smashed the windows of stores of white merchants who amass their wealth from the ghetto but live elsewhere.

The riotous nights and a day in Rochester commenced shortly before midnight last Friday when two policemen beat an allegedly drunken Negro man, prior to making an arrest, then unleashed their police dog upon him when he resisted their assaults.

The bloody incident occurred under the eyes of about 200 patrons of a street dance that was sponsored by the North-Eastern Mothers Improvement Association. The crowd of spectators upbraided the police and two of the policemen were shoved and cuffed about.

Moments later, scores of police prowl cars and riot squad vans converged on the Joseph Avenue area.



The Negro community responded to the invasion of policemen by pouring into the streets and declaiming its protest. The police scattered the crowds with flaying clubs, tear gas, police dogs, gunfire and jet streams of water from fire engines.

An 8:00 p.m. curfew was imposed on the city for Saturday night. But the surging crowds of outraged Negro people still flowed up and down the streets of the barricaded ghettos.

The initial outbreak of Negro indignation against the police at the street dance, was multiplied and made general when carloads and trucks-full of young white hoodlums followed the police prowls into the Negro communities. They attacked Negro youngsters, cursed and abused Negro women, and hurled beer cans and bottles at street corner crowds with impunity in full view of the police.

National Guardsmen, with bayonets fixed on their rifles, took up positions in the south-west section of Rochester Sunday evening. Gov. Nelson Rockefeller ordered the 1st Battalion of the 209th Artillery and the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 108th Infantry to guard duty in Rochester to supplement the estimated 1,200 policemen now on duty there.

The Governor ordered the troops into the city when new outbreaks of violent demonstrations developed after a police helicopter crashed into a boarding house at Clarissa and Tremont Sts.

As a result of the crash and the ensuing fire, three Negro residents were burned to death. The police pilot who had been hovering over the Negro quarter of the city at roof top level died in the crash also.

Over 1,000 Negroes have been arrested and 300 have suffered reported injuries.

Pointing at the indifference of the police to the provocations of the gangs of white youth raiders who made continuous sorties into the community, a Negro man exclaimed: "You see there how it is. There are two sets of law, one for white and one for black. It's the same old crap and we ain't going to take no more of it. I mean, this police brutality."

The chairman of the Rochester branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

(NAACP), Mrs. Mildred Johnson, warned the authorities that—"The people are tired of police brutality and it must be stopped in every degree. Either it is stopped or they will use other means."

Rochester has a population of almost one-third of a million, ten per cent of whom are Negro Americans. It is the site of the great Eastman Kodak Company and associated enterprises. It has over 800 other manufacturing plants, foremost among which are its electrical equipment factories.

It boasts a distinguished symphony orchestra—the Rochester Philharmonic, the world-famed Eastman School of Music and Rochester University. Nevertheless such accoutrements of culture seem to have had little humanist influence upon the mores of sections of its citizenry when equitable and integrated relations with Negro fellow citizens are called for.

During the course of the current year Negroes had had to conduct rent strikes for access to safe and decent housing; demonstrations and court suits for the abolition of a pattern of segregation in the school districts; picketing of business enterprises and craft locals for the right to jobs; as well as previous cases of criminal police brutality.

Rochester has grievous wrongs to correct. She has committed these wrongs against her Negro citizens. She has a glorious traditional image to reclaim. All of her claim to worth in history is associated with her courageous role in the cause of Negro freedom from slavery.

She was the proud outpost city on the Freedomway of the Underground Railroad to Canada. She was the defiant cradle of the abolitionist revolutionaries. She was the home of the great liberator—Frederick Douglass—for 20 years after 1847, the year when he brought forth the militant anti-slavery newspaper, *The North Star*. In all of the over 2,000 cities of America, only in Rochester can you behold a full life-sized statue of the great ex-slave who, more than any man, moulded a mighty anti-slavery front that saved the nation and freed his people.

America cannot let an unknowing few of this generation grind into the dust the cape of honor and freedom that belongs to Rochester.



#### IV.

The explosions of wrath have spent themselves. An uncertain calm now pervades the atmosphere of the three communities which were last week's flaming headlines of battles of outraged Negroes against massive assault forces of pistol-firing and billy-wielding police.

In the wards of the city hospitals in Harlem, Bedford-Stuyvesant and Rochester, all but 10 or 12 of the half thousand casualties of the turbulent week were well on their way to recovery. But the jails were still bulging with the victims of police hysteria and indiscriminate arrests.

The cauldrons of the steaming ghettos (which are the meager living spaces which the cities meanly allot for Negro habitation) have returned to their ever-simmering norm; they have ceased boiling over.

The flames have died down but the coals still burn. It would be the greatest folly for the powers-that-be to delay coming forward with the announcement of a full-scale program for the all-sided-renovation of the Harlem of this country. Furthermore, it would be a provocation, equivalent to the shot in the back of 15-year-old schoolboy James Powell, which the hate-crazed policeman Gilligan fired on that fateful day, if the city officials of New York and Rochester do not come forth with really substantial positive responses to the concerted demands of the spokesmen of the Negro communities.

In every city in this country with sizeable Negro communities, the demand has been repeated like a chant, again and again, for relief from the predatory abuse of power and brutality of the police. Negroes everywhere demand that the police be bridled and the reigns of control be put in the hands of citizens review boards.

As standard a malpractice as wanton police brutality is in respect to the Negro neighborhoods of the cities of our country, as urgent as sweeping reorganization and reform of the police structure are, the police are but a part of the whole pattern and purpose of the oppression and persecution of the Negro ghettos.

The police are the executors of the will of the mercenary, moneyed merchants in misery, that handful of the richest men who dwell in the loftiest chambers of the economic and

political power structure of our capitalist social system. It is they who ultimately profit from the super-exploitation of the Negro and the effect that his low living standard has upon depressing and denying the masses of Negro and white working people as a whole a standard of living at a level it properly should be.

It is these powerful monopolists who won the economy and dominate the political life of the nation, who have had the power all along to wipe the blight of slums from our cities and the wolf of hunger from the doors of their inhabitants.

Therefore it is manifest that the message to the nation, the roars of rage which rose from the Harlems of New York last week, calls for a deep-going program of social and economic rehabilitation.

More than this, Negroes served notice to the nation at large, that ghetto life for them has become no longer endurable. The hour has come when the Government must meet its obligation to its long-deprived and discriminated-against citizens; it must make a major compensating payment to its Negro citizens in the form of major measures to wipe out the ghetto and slum characteristics of the areas in which they live.

This must be done simultaneous with guaranteeing that no walls of exclusion of Negroes, no color bar to the fullest integration of Negroes in the total life of the cities and of the nation remain standing.

The tasks of all thoughtful citizens is to see that the authorities at the city, state and Federal level shall act with dispatch and with a full plant to liquidate the horrible social conditions and satisfy the terrible urgent material needs of the people in the Harlems of the country.

In a remarkably perceptive as well as prophetic article, the editors of FREEDOMWAYS, quarterly magazine of the Negro Freedom Movement, introduced their special HARLEM number last July 1963, with a message that went unheeded by the ruling powers. Here again are the words of their statement. It must be hearkened to this time.

"Harlem is something else than a particular ethnic community of Manhattan's upper east side; Harlem is a condition of life for the overwhelming number of the



two-thirds of America's twenty million Negroes who live in its cities.

"Harlem is a community of New York but Harlem is a euphemism for those most deprived areas in every city of the country which are assigned to Negroes in the United States.

"Negro citizens live in the Harlems of her cities not out of choice but from the absence of choice.

"Poverty more than the distinctiveness of color hold Negro Americans fast in the Harlems of America and set them apart from their fellow Americans.

"The massive deprivation and poverty of those who live in the Harlems of America are, ironically, a direct and indirect source of fabulous riches which flow into the coffers of those who command the economic and political power structure of our nation.

"Harlem has grievances. Harlem is angry. Harlem is determined on a course of mass direct action to obtain redress of her grievances. The Harlems of the North and West are joining the new democratic revolution which was born of the Southern Negroes' desegregation battles."

## V.

From now until November 2, the major efforts of the primary civil rights organizations of the country should be concentrated upon "encouraging the Negro people, North and South, to register and to vote". Such was the consensus of a gathering of several of the most prominent spokesmen of various organizations of the Negro Freedom Movement, following a one-day consultation in New York last Wednesday.

In a statement which Roy Wilkins, executive secretary of the NAACP, read to a press conference following the meeting, the need to shift tactics to bring to the fore work in the area of "political action" was stressed.

Declaring that the climate of liberal democracy in the U.S. is threatened by the awesome presence and ruthless thrust of the Goldwater forces into the national political arena, the leaders called for special efforts to insure the defeat of Goldwater and the forces gathered under his banner at the polls November 2, 1964. The statement

asserted that the Goldwater forces stand upon "a states' rights platform, chosen at the very time Mississippi was exhibiting to a shocked nation the callous repression, the violence and death which mark the operation of the states' rights theory in the human rights field".

Pointing out that racism has been injected into the campaign by virtue of the "states' rights position" adopted by Goldwater and the rally of every racist and Ku Kluxer to his banner, the leaders in their statement declared in part: "We call upon our members and supporters to utilize the months ahead to enlist voters, to expand the enforcement of the new Civil Rights Act and to win new friends and new supporters for the civil rights cause, which is not alone our cause but the cause of America. Without the freedoms inherent in this cause, neither we nor our country will be free."

In attendance at the conference of leaders who met in the national office of the NAACP were: Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; John Lewis, chairman of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee; Roy Wilkins, executive secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Whitney M. Young, Jr., executive director of the National Urban League; James Farmer, national director of the Congress of Racial Equality; A. Philip Randolph, chairman of the Negro American Labor Council; Bayard Rustin of the March on Washington Committee; Jack Greenberg, director of the Educational and Legal Defense Fund, and Courtney Cox of the Northern Students Movement.

The concern of the leaders was focused upon ways and means of affecting the largest possible mobilization of Negro citizens and civil rights supporters for the next 90 crucial days leading up to the fateful November 2 election day. However, speculators in discord and promoters of disunity between the Negro leaders and all other forces in the electorate striving to concert their strength against the ultra-Rightist challenge of the Goldwater menace, eagerly seized upon certain words in the statement such as "broad curtailment" and "moratorium", and used them as a dividing wedge to solicit demurrers from the



unity statement in respect to the urgent call for massive voter registration activity.

Consequently several other leaders of mass struggles on the far-flung freedom front took strong exception to any suggestion that the Negro people or their white supporters refrain from pushing the demands for fulfilment of the pledges of the Civil Rights Act or for securing relief from the wanton police brutality and other acute needs which take no holiday in their toll in lives and misery in the Negro "ghettos".

Whatever the degrees of difference these expressed over the choice of language in the statement of the "summit" leaders, the outstanding feature of the response to the "call" is the totality of agreement that the Negro masses and their white allies must be mobilized to the maximum extent possible, and be armed with the only weapon—the ballot—that will be meaningful in the decisive confrontation at the polling booth this November with the forces of declared racism and threatening fascism, the forces of Goldwaterism.

To the democratic forces of the nation as a whole, the mature and far-visioned action of the Negro leaders, in inspiring a crusade to arm the masses with the ability to join the crucial battle come November, constitutes a standing example and challenge which should move the leaders of the trade unions, clergymen, seekers for world peace and youth to "go thou and do likewise".

In this election contest, the democratic heritage of the nation is at stake. Furthermore, the issue of securing the rights of the Negro people and upholding the standard of Constitutional government is indissolubly joined. To the white masses the challenge presents itself thusly; either together with the Negro as your brother, or risk gaining a Goldwater as your master.

But now come mealy-mouthed politicians and even some well intentioned folk into the public print to urge Negroes to forego seeking any further advancement in their lot lest they trigger off the latent prejudices of white people who have grown jealous of the attention given to the demands of the Negroes.

Poll takers of public opinion have published samplings designed to show that numerous white voters are threaten-

ing to "switch their vote to Goldwater" if Negroes don't stop "raising hell for their rights" and if the "Democrats don't stop coddling them".

But it is slander against the white masses of Americans to suggest that they are so blinded by racial prejudice that they would rather vote in a neo-fascist Goldwater in the name of the preservation of white supremacy than to support a program for securing the rights of the Negro people as a vital part of the defense and advancement of democracy and progress and peace against the challenge of the ultra-Right wildmen who have seized control of the Republican Party and bear its nominee for President upon their shoulders.

This election contest is so decisive because it joins the issues clearly—of peace or war; of civil rights and Negro equality or racism; of a war against poverty or tax sops for the rich.

No one should seek to obscure the sharpness of these choices which are in contest in this election.

## VI.

In the name of first one thing and then another, the men of means and the politicians in power, beg off from doing anything substantial about the wastelands of want in the great metropolises where millions of Negroes search in vain for some oasis of opportunity to relieve their gnawing need.

The outbursts of long-smoldering anger, the elemental eruption of outraged street crowds against the white policemen and the plate glass fronts of the stores of the white merchants which have already occurred this summer in New York City's Harlem, Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant, and the "Negro wards" of Rochester, were but a tapping of running springs of discontent which well up from turbulent rivers of deep deprivation and degrading discrimination that lie just beneath the surface in the Harlems of every American city.

The statistical indicators of the clashing contrast of the situation and circumstance of the "average" Harlemit and the "average" New Yorker can be duplicated in all of the larger cities of the country.



Census data of the New York State Labor Department reveal that in Harlem some 66,500 people make their homes in a single square mile of the city as a whole.

Harlem's people pay two and three times more per room in rent than is paid in the city as a whole, and they pay such exorbitant rentals for slum housing, one-half of all of Harlem's housing being classified as "substandard".

Last year alone, over 300 cases of rat bitten children were reported from Harlem.

Not only is rent higher in Harlem but the price of foodstuff is 20 per cent higher on an average, and the quality of merchandise and produce on sale in its almost exclusively white owned and operated stores is uniformly of inferior quality to that available in other sections of the city.

For the city as a whole, unemployment hovers around the 5 per cent mark, but for Harlem it is three times higher—15 per cent of her normal work force is jobless.

Harlem has to pay more for less, with less money than other New Yorkers. Median annual family income of Harlemites is much lower than for New Yorkers as a whole and than the minimum standard budget for city dwellers.

The 45.3 infant deaths per 1,000 births in Harlem is almost twice the rate for the city as a whole and is the kind of statistic that covers a multitude of crimes against humanity which society commits daily in terms of its failure to provide minimal hospitalization, clinic and health care services to its citizens who dwell in poverty.

A Niagara of words has been spoken and reports written about the volcano of social misery and unattended needs of the people who populate the Harlems of America. But precious little has been done about changing the conditions.

The recent volcanic eruptions in the Harlems of New York, Brooklyn and Rochester ought to signalize a warning to the procrastinating programmer against poverty and prejudice that the time to act is NOW and that the scale of action required for effectiveness must be MASSIVE.

As Langston Hughes, Harlem's poet laureate has said, you can't keep treating Harlem like a dog without risking being bitten.

Nothing less than a program on the dimensions of that put forward by the Communist Party will at all meet the

humane challenge to relieve the suffering of the masses of human beings, our fellow Americans, who have been held captive in the incredible squalor of America's Harlems. There is no magic formula in the program of the Communists. It calls for the city, state and Federal governments to do their duty in a joint reconstruction and renovation project to remove the blight and to brighten the places where Harlem's people live. It calls for the allocation and painful expenditure of 15 billion dollars—about half of the estimated cost of putting a man on the moon. The physical rehabilitation of Harlem, U.S.A. will lay a material foundation for and go hand in hand with smashing all the remaining barriers to the political and social integration of Harlem's people in the total social and cultural milieu of the cities and the nation.

New York and the nation were shaken up by the Harlem show of temper and everywhere one reads or hears the incredulous query of "Why did they do it?" The police were the provocative agency. Harlem hates the police. As James Baldwin has well said, "Their real role in Harlem is simply to corral and control the citizens of the ghetto, and protect white business interests there." Nevertheless, Baldwin observed that "the riots always have the same stubborn cause—the conditions of life in the ghetto".

It is these "conditions of life" which must be changed in any meaningful response to Harlem's anger and anguish and her shout for help.

The answering voice must come with the announcements of jobs for the jobless; new housing for the hundreds of thousands who have been forced into the viper pits of the slumlords; quality education in integrated schools; new hospitals; new parks and recreational areas; radical reform of the policing service with policemen drawn from the neighborhood. Practical things from the government spokesmen, not platitudes, are what Harlem wants.



September 20, 1964

## 8. THE TUSKEGEE ADVANCE

Up to last Tuesday's balloting, the city council of Tuskegee, Ala., was made up of three white men, with two vacant posts to be filled in a run-off election following the regular election Aug. 11. Seating of the council had been postponed to await the run-off.

When the results of the run-off were tabulated and posted, it was revealed that the now completed city council would include the previously elected three white citizens, plus the victors in the run-off—two Negro citizens.

The Negro councilmen are prominent figures in the community's civil rights and civic affairs struggles. One is a faculty member of famed Tuskegee Institute, Dr. Stanley Hugh Smith, and the other is a clergyman of the area, the Rev. K. L. Buford.

Both won out over white candidates as well as against some four other Negro contestants.

In this election run-off the Negro voters of Tuskegee exhibited a political sophistication and maturity of judgment unequaled in American political practice.

In the mayoralty election which had also gone into a run-off, the Negro vote was cast solidly in support of the more progressive challenger to the incumbent, although both contestants were white men, thus giving Charles M. Keever the victory over Mayor Howard Rutherford.

Four of the six Negro candidates in the councilmanic race received token "courtesy" votes of their intimate friends and close relatives, but the mass of the Negro vote was cast strictly on the basis of support to the candidates

with maximum qualifying records of leadership to the community and capability for discharging their new duties at the level of city government.

Furthermore, the Negro electorate wholeheartedly endorsed the doctrine of the leadership of the Tuskegee Movement to elect a NEGRO-WHITE UNITY GOVERNMENT for the city of Tuskegee to correspond to the overall goal of the Southern Negro freedom movement—for *equality through democratic integration in the political, economic and social life of the total community and the country at large*. The counsels of those isolated Negro spokesmen who advocated a *Negro only ticket* as a response to the *white supremacy ticket* of the Wallacites and the incumbent traditionalists were rebuffed. The minions of George Wallace, arch-racist Alabama Governor, sought to spread an alarm throughout Macon County, Alabama, and throughout the South and nation that the Negro voters, in areas where they constituted the majority, were going out to trample the rights of the white minorities, in revenge for the historic injustices which disfranchised Negroes had experienced when the whites were the dominant political force.

The balloting at Tuskegee gave the lie to such a scurrilous accusation. This vote showed that the Southern Negro masses, so long disfranchised by terror, by fraud, by gerrymander, by unconstitutional local laws, as they come into possession of the right to vote, are using and will further use their tool of suffrage not for unrewarding revenge-seeking but for securing justice and advancement of the welfare of the whole community and the rights of the whole people.

The election of Buford and Smith in Tuskegee symbolized the commencement of the fulfilment of the prophecy of the last of the Negro Congressmen from the South, Rep. White of North Carolina, when he vowed in his terminal address before the House at the turn of the century that "though we are now being deprived of all representation in the councils of government, though we are being illegally forced to vacate this lofty chamber of the representatives of the people, sires, we shall be going only to come again. Indeed, sires, we shall return!"

The rights of 5,397 Negro and 1,310 white residents of a college town in deepest Alabama have been meaningfully enlarged thanks to the persistent, self-sacrificing and heroic



struggle of fighters for freedom and democracy, in a form and by means appropriate for their circumstances and in the interest of social progress and democracy as a whole. But what has happened in Tuskegee is but only a first step toward a commencement of the historic task of the democratization of the political life in the South as the reins of power over there are still in the hands of the white racist oligarchies that have for so long kept the area in backwardness, misery and segregation. There are many more battles to be fought out before final victory is won and a genuinely representative government in the South is established.

## **9. SAVAGE ASSAULTS AT SELMA (ALABAMA)**

February 16, 1965

### **Sheriff Beats Children**

Selma's soulless savages—the Sheriff James G. Clark and his deputies—are committing outrage after outrage against the Negro people and their white supporters.

With Rev. Martin Luther King at their head, Selma's Negroes are engaging in a campaign of resolute but peaceful demonstrations to compel the authorities to follow the law and register them as citizens with full voting rights.

The campaign in Selma has been on for less than a month, yet one out of every three Negroes there, 3,400, have been jailed by Sheriff Clark. Hundreds of men, women, and youths were brutally beaten during arrests and in the jails.

Through television and news cameramen the nation and the world have witnessed the fiendish cruelty of Selma's racist maniacs: the three-mile run which the Negro children were forced to make while being herded like cattle by the sheriff and his deputies, who beat the little ones with clubs and jabbed them with cattle prods which emitted electric shocks.

Reporting from the scene, a newsman wrote: "One girl was crying and could not stop. Another showed a lump on her head and said one of the possemen had put it there with a cattle prod. The excited youngster told of a girl who had already been taken back to the church, ill. A teenage boy said the girl had stopped along the way, unable



to go on. He said a posseman jabbed her with his club and said: 'March, dammit. She's going to march.' A nine-year-old boy stood in the yard with dried tears staining his face. He made the march barefoot. Clarence Carson, 15, stood rubbing his lips. A posseman had hit him in the mouth with his club."

Not content with carrying out a mass assault upon, and abuse of, the bodies and human dignity of the children, the maniacal Sheriff, James Clark, ground his heel in the soul of the Negroes of Selma, and indeed of the whole nation, with the barbarous act of inhumanity against the brilliant young spiritual leader of the Southern Movement, the Rev. James Bevel. Rev. Bevel was taken to a treatment center for Negroes from the bedless, unheated, cement-floored bull-pen of the prison camp, where he lay ill with viral pneumonia. There, in the segregated Burwell infirmary, he was shackled to his bed by leg irons, though his life was in danger from the virulent fever and attendant weakness.

In one and the same week, Americans have witnessed others of their countrymen committing CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY in two far-flung places of the earth. The torturers of the Negro children of Selma are kinsmen of the napalm bombers and burners of the children in the villages of North Vietnam. The Americans dare not delay in divorcing themselves from these equally savage crimes against humanity. For these horrible deeds are renegade acts which offend everything that Americans stand for. In truth, they have mocked our nation with infamy and shame.

Sheriff James Clark, his deputies and possemen—these torturers of little children, these violators of the afflicted are deserving of the harshest penalty that an outraged justice can assign for them.

We call to all men and women of conscience to speak out and demand Federal action by President Johnson and the Department of Justice against the continuing racist outrages being perpetrated against Negro Americans seeking to exercise their citizenship in Mississippi, Alabama, South Carolina and elsewhere in the South.

March 9, 1965

## A "Bloody Sunday"

The horror that was Selma, Ala., last Sunday (the 7th of March) cannot help but shock every decent American into action to protect the lives of the brave Negro men, women and children seeking only to achieve the right to vote under the guarantees of the Constitution.

The vicious clubbing, whipping and tear-gassing of Negro citizens by bestial, sadistic, racist state troopers under orders from Alabama Governor Wallace should make every American tremble for the safety of democracy and liberty in this country.

What is frightening about the Selma, Ala., crisis is the inaction of the Johnson administration and the Federal Government to protect the Negro citizens marching to Alabama's capital, Montgomery, to protest against the blocks to their registration to vote.

Yet Washington knew the Negro people were going to march and when, and the Federal Government knew the Alabama state troopers had been ordered to break up the march.

But President Johnson did not order U.S. marshals or Federal troops into Selma to defend the lives of the Negro people. And the FBI agents in the area stood idly by while the brutal clubbings and bull-whipping went on.

And then the Johnson administration sat on its hands awaiting a report from the FBI as to whether the bestial racist Alabama stormtroopers "used unnecessary violence" in clubbing and bull-whipping Negro men, women and children.

The Johnson administration must be made to realize that the American people want the Negro people protected in their lives and property from the racists.

Write or wire President Johnson demanding that he send U.S. marshals and Federal troops into Alabama immediately to defend the lives of the Negro people and that he order the Justice Department to seek prosecution of Governor Wallace and the brutal state troopers.



## LBJ's Racist Appointment

A national reputation for hard-nosed defense of white supremacy was established by James P. Coleman in 1956 when he was Governor of Mississippi. He made the front page of the world's press that year when he had a Negro school teacher committed to the state mental hospital (the "colored section", that is) because the Negro teacher had made application to enroll in the University of Mississippi.

Coleman's term of office as Governor was also notable for the number of church burnings and unsolved lynch-murders of Negroes who were engaged in activities seeking to get Negroes registered as voters.

Last Thursday, President Lyndon Johnson named this notorious racist to a judgeship on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. The Fifth Circuit, it must be noted, includes Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas and the Panama Canal Zone. This Court sits in review of most of the legal initiatives and appeals of the Negro victims of racist prejudice and persecution. It presides over the hard core of the unreconstructed "Deep South". Heretofore, it has had a white supremacist bloc of four out of nine votes. The appointment of Coleman, the former Governor of Mississippi, perpetuates the practice of retaining the power of nullification in matters of civil rights in the hands of the Southern racists themselves.

Along with Coleman, the President named his Texas crony, Homer Thornberry, to the same Court. For Thornberry, the appointment represents a promotion from the Federal District Court. He had served in the District Court utterly without distinction when it came to matters of civil rights and human rights.

The appointment of Coleman and Thornberry to the Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit is a startling disclosure of the Administration's duplicity in matters of securing and safeguarding the rights of Negro citizens. At Howard University's commencement day exercises, Johnson promised that the Government would use all of its powers to make meaningful the equality of rights of the Negro people. But when an opportunity has arisen to facilitate

implementation of the Constitutional rights and high court rulings in the cause of justice for Negro Americans by filling vacancies on the southernmost Federal Appeals Court with men of integrity, Johnson has turned his back on his promises made at Howard and stooped down to appease the white supremacy Southern politicians.

The spokesmen of the Negro people have registered militant protests against this crude piece of horse trading away from vital positions for defending the Negro people's rights which Johnson has done with his latest appointments to the Court. It is important that labor and all justice-loving people join in this protest.

Indeed, it is high time that the President be made mindful of the fact that all decent people in our country and the world around demand that he take effective executive measures to put an end to the outrageous mass arrests of hundreds of Negro and white Americans by the Mississippi authorities for exercising their Constitutional right of petition and assembly in protesting the new crop of racist laws which the state's legislators have just enacted. Mississippi has made a mockery of democracy, and the challenge to all is to bring real democracy into play to remake Mississippi.

It is high time that law and order be established throughout the whole South.

August 29, 1965

## His Brother's Keeper

The conditions under which the majority of the people of Hayneville, Ala., live are fascist-like in things political and slavery-like in things economic. The majority of the people there are Negroes.

It was to this place in the Deep South that the Episcopal seminarian, Jonathan M. Daniels, had come to take up a summer ministry with a voter registration team. He was standing in front of the general store with his Roman Catholic priest-colleague, the 26-year-old Rev. Richard Morrisroe, when a part-time deputy sheriff came up and, cursing them as "nigger loving traitors to the white race", unloaded a double-barrelled blast from his shotgun into their bodies.



Jonathan Daniels died there in a pool of his own blood on Alabama's barren red clay. Rev. Morrisroe, after an 11-hour operation, will need a believer's miracle to hold on to life.

Across the way in Jackson, Miss., the angel of death kept vigil at Baptist Hospital where the life of the Rev. Donald A. Thompson, the 59-year-old pastor of the Unitarian Church, flickered and waned. He had also been the victim of a blast from the shotgun of a white racist who had lurked in the shadows of a Negro minister's home to which Rev. Thompson had driven in company with a brother clergyman.

The number of white men of the cloth, clerics of three different denominations, who were shot down by deputy sheriffs and white supremacists and left dead or dying in Alabama and Mississippi last week, was equal to the alleged death toll of whites during the flaming week of the Watts Ghetto upsurge in Los Angeles.

The violence wreaked upon the bodies of these noble clergymen who were way down South crusading for the right of Negroes to have their freedom to vote and be treated with dignity and humaneness by the authorities made no headlines.

The police and military shot to death 33 Negroes in Watts and inflicted gun, bayonet and police club injuries upon hundreds of others in revenge for some food and merchandise stores which were put on fire and their contents seized and distributed among the poor.

But the identified murderer of that courageous young Christian crusader, Jonathan Daniels, still roams the streets of Hayneville with his shotgun in the crook of his arm, free on only \$12,000 bail bond.

County Prosecutor Carlton L. Perdue opined that the white clergymen themselves were somehow to blame for getting themselves shot; in supporting the freeing of the deputy sheriff on bail, he said they wouldn't have been shot "if they'd been minding their own business like I tend mine".

The day they laid the body of young Jonathan M. Daniels to rest in the cemetery in Keene, New Hampshire, the editor of the local paper, the *Keene Sentinel*, responded to the conscienceless Alabama Prosecutor as follows:

"In dying, not only was Jonathan Daniels minding his own business, but he also was attending to HIS business."

The business of righting the social outrages in our country is indeed everybody's business. The Federal Government is increasingly expressing "alarm" at what it characterizes as a deepening nation-wide crisis of Negro deprivation. A recent study of the Labor Department's Office of Policy Planning called "the Negro plight the nation's most dangerous social problem". The report said further "that despite recent civil rights legislation the social and economical situation of most Negroes appears to be getting worse instead of better, particularly in the big city ghettos".

The Government's "viewing with alarm" the deteriorating and increasingly desperate lot of the 20 million Negro Americans has not moved it to undertake the large-scale reconstruction program for the country's urban ghettos and rural slums which the situation demands for any meaningful relief.

An investment of billions of dollars is required to wipe out the slums and the conditions which help sustain the color bar of racism in the minds and customs of many millions of Americans.

But the resources, energies and morality required of the nation to seriously undertake this kind of democratic reformation in the wastelands of our cities, where millions dwell in misery, will never be mobilized without the concerted intervention of the concerned citizens to redirect such resources from the deadly desert of war in Vietnam.

The struggle to eliminate, or even substantially reduce, the current rate of deterioration in the life of the masses in need at home is inexorably joined to the struggle of those same concerned millions to bring about an end to the wasteful, destructive and world-endangering games of death which our Government is playing abroad.



## 10. WATTS BURNS WITH RAGE

After you have read all about the riot in Los Angeles, that is, you will have to weigh all of the thousands of words of the newsmen's "battle scene" stories against one solid statistic: the head count of the dead. The uncontested fact is that of the 36 people who died in the six days of wrath, 33 were NEGROES.

In addition to the sum and the division of the dead, other statistics have been dutifully compiled. There were 900 persons hospitalized for injuries, and almost all of them were Negroes. Negroes arrested in the Watts area of Los Angeles were jammed into every available space in the city jails—of the over four thousand people who were arrested in the area all were Negroes.

The papers reported in some detail how the National Guardsmen operated in "the field" while another 8,000 in reserve awaited their turn. An AP man wrote that on Sunday morning "about 4:30 a.m., a woman motorist approached a National Guard blockade at 59th Street and Vermont Ave. When she failed to stop on command, guardsmen opened fire with a machine gun. A policeman who helped carry her to an ambulance said, 'Her legs were almost cut off.' She was identified as Mrs. Lerner Cooke, 47, a Negro."

A staff man for the *N. Y. Herald Tribune* told of the team work between Lt. Richard Bogard's police from the Venice district and Col. Tom Haykin's 1st Battalion, 100th Infantry, 40th Armored Division of the National Guard. The combined force occupied the firehouse on 103rd St. (Watts) as their command post.

"The Guardsmen hit two men they figured were snipers. Maybe they were; maybe they were just curious," the

reporter wrote. They were dragged into the firehouse and propped against the wall. One resisted as a doctor probed in the hole in his shoulder for the bullet lodged there.

"'Choke him till he blacks out,' a policeman said and somebody choked one of the suspects till he blacked out. He revived in a minute, coughing blood, and the fight was out of him." Again the reporter told how—

"The National Guardsmen shot into the blackness and a Negro came out, hands up, blood streaming down his face, soaking his clothes red. He was wounded, but he was alive.

"Earlier, one National Guardsman had fired a perfect shot. He hit a man in the middle of the forehead, the shot had ripped off the back of the man's head. He was dead upstairs in the firehouse. 'It was a beautiful shot,' a detective said. 'We've killed two here so far, wounded a lot of others,' someone said."

Who were the white victims of the riot? There was a sheriff's deputy—Ronald E. Ludlow, 27—and another white man died of a wound that could have come from a police riot gun, also a white fireman died when a wall of a burning building fell upon him.

Most of the 33 Negroes who were killed were gunned to death by police wielding riot guns. The National Guardsmen, of course, also machine-gunned a woman driving in her car. Then there was the four-year-old Negro "looter and rioter", Bruce Brown, who was shot to death in his front yard. His riotous 3-year-old brother was wounded by the spray of police bullets and Guardsmen's 30 caliber machine-gun fire, but at last reports he was still alive.

Not so with 18-year-old Charles Shortridge who was all set to enter Los Angeles City College in September; he lay there dead as his uncle stared unbelievably at the huge punched-out places the riot-gun shells had left in his nephew's head, neck and cheek.

They say it was a "race war", "an insurrection", etc. But how come it turns out that 33 Negroes were killed to 1 white deputy sheriff?

This was no "race riot". This was an elemental scream of outrage from a violated people entombed in a prison house of social deprivation and economic impoverishment.



No man has a right to expect that those whom the men of power and privilege, the capitalist ruling circle, have rendered reliefless in their wretchedness will forever slumber silently in the lower depths where they have been consigned by this society of bourgeois and billionaire.

Only those ignorant of history, only those blinded to the sight of injustice and the daily degradation of the Negro detainees of the slums of this country's great cities, ringed all about as they are by towering walls of white-supremacy, hatred and exclusion; only simpletons can assume that prisoners will not generate out of the fury of their circumstance the fire with which to ignite their cages. And so they set fire to their prisons, those unattended, denied, abused and degraded ones. They burned their prisons as did the desperate ones who followed Spartacus. Like the ragged ones who marched and sang with Villon. Like the slave chain breakers who lived to hang with Nat Turner.

So they made other statistics—500 stores of absentee-owners were set afire.

One of those who lost a store to the angry uprising of the downtrodden of Watts of Los Angeles (the City of the Angels it says in the Chamber of Commerce ads) was a certain Richard Gold. Mr. Gold has many stores, a chain of furniture stores, so he will simply write that burned one off of his income tax returns next year.

But the point is that Mr. Gold knows more about the time of day in the world we all live in than most of the men of his class and all of the Los Angeles city fathers. Said Mr. Gold:

"I cannot condemn these people. These people should not be shot down like dogs. White people who were as poor as they would burn and loot if they saw the chance. What's behind this is pentup anger over poverty and miserable housing."

Mr. Gold, the Watts businessman, is white and right on this score.

Watts is the city center of a Negro population which numbers some 523,000 in the whole of metropolitan Los Angeles. Watts is indeed the most poverty-ridden area of lush, plush, tinselled and glittering Los Angeles. Into its 150 blocks are jammed 67,000 Negroes. They pay high rents

for unpet, 25-year-old houses. They shop in neighborhood enterprises which employ of themselves.

There in Watts, income is lowest in all of Los Angeles, save the "skid row" district. Unemployment is several times higher in Watts than for the city as a whole. More than one-third of Watts Negroes are unemployed. Unemployment among its youth is almost twice as much. Close to 60 per cent of the Watts population depend on relief.

The *New York Times* on Sunday told it as it was when it said that—"The fact is that the new Civil Rights Laws—and the related anti-poverty program—have not yet greatly improved the lot of the Negroes in the teeming ghettos of the cities of the North."

The welkin sounds that came from Watts last weekend were loud and angry enough to have shaken the complacent into a wide-eyed confrontation of the reality of the challenge by the slum-confined millions who have come to the point where they were determined not to live longer in the same old way.

Billy Graham, the head of a Crusade for Christianity Movement, called the Watts' explosion a "dress rehearsal for revolution", and blessed the clubs and guns of the police for crushing it lest it spread to other cities and "require the nation's armed might to quell it".

Fortunately, the frenetic fulminations of Billy Graham did not set the pattern for the commentary of notables in American life upon last week's social explosion in the Negro ghetto of Los Angeles. There were thoughtful observations and conclusions being suggested by many prominent personalities.

Senator Robert Kennedy, formerly Attorney General, scored the philistines who think the answer to Watts-like outbursts lies in applying more police muscle. He is quoted as saying,

"There is no point in telling Negroes to obey the law. To many Negroes, the law is the enemy. In Harlem, in Bedford-Stuyvesant (Brooklyn), it has almost always been used against them." He emphasized that "the only real hope for ending the violence is in speeding up social programs directed at the problems of slum Negroes".

Dr. Ralph J. Bunche, Under Secretary of the United Nations, in a statement to the press said:



"The ominous message of Watts is that city, state and national authorities must quickly show the vision, the determination, and the courage to take those bold—and costly—steps necessary to begin the dispersal of every black ghetto in this land."

And he warned that continued social neglect and police abuse of the most oppressed and exploited Negroes, shoved as they are into ignored corners of the cities—"black ghettos"—are the tinder for future explosions "in every city in this country with substantial population".

Prof. Frank Hartung, sociologist of Southern Illinois University, asserted:

"It will be as difficult—but not more difficult—to eliminate this sort of violence as if is to eliminate poverty... Major social reformation, going far beyond the passage of civil rights laws will be required to eliminate the threat of future upheavals from the Negro slums." Herbert C. Ward, Machinists' District 727 business agent and chairman of the Communist Labor Committee, spoke for Negro labor leaders in the Los Angeles area in demanding the immediate removal of the Los Angeles police chief William H. Parker as the most universally hated symbol of the continuous and wanton police brutality and terror which the Negro people are subjected to. Furthermore, he called for: the immediate starting of slum clearance and new housing projects with public and private resources; the construction of a fully equipped hospital; the cooperation of all levels of Government in an intensive program of placing unemployed and underemployed Negro young people in jobs or training for jobs at standard rates of pay.

Burt Lancaster, the Hollywood star, derided the hysterical reaction of some whites and their exclamation of alarm. Said Lancaster, "I'm just surprised it didn't happen sooner." And the screen writer, Abbey Mann, added, "I don't condone rioting, but anybody who doesn't understand it has no heart."

A man in Watts said the word over the television interview:

"We are never going back to letting anybody run over us any more.

"We ain't going to just stand and look while they beat us.

"We ain't going hungry and ragged when they got more'n they can eat and wear either.

"Those fires lit something inside my soul too."

The challenge of the Watts explosion can be met only by a truly massive program to extend genuine material equality of opportunity to the Negro masses in particular and to those who dwell in poverty and social deprivation.

It means a vast increase in the investments in the War Against Poverty Program, an increase that can only come about through a proportionate decrease in the expenditures in the criminal diversion of national resources and men to the dirty work the Johnson Administration is carrying out in Vietnam, where U.S. soldiers are busy killing people who have risen in behalf of freedom for themselves as did our forefathers in the Revolutionary War.

In Watts itself, what is called for is not only a total economic opportunity program for wiping out unemployment and for proper job-training, but a program for the total reconstruction of the area. All the blight of slum conditions must be eliminated in accord with a plan speedily implemented. Housing, educational, recreational facilities must be provided for in full measure.

In addition, Watts requires that Negroes, who are more than 90 per cent of the population, shall be predominant in the police department, fire fighting, and other city service jobs and functions for the area. Also, merchants doing business in the area must employ Negroes in their establishments in a just ratio.

With such an approach for Watts and for all the ghetto cities of the country, guarantees can be established against recurrences of such tragic outbursts of primitive protest and outrage at injustice.

As Rep. Augustus F. Hawkins, Los Angeles Negro Congressman, said, "The trouble is that nothing has ever been done to solve the long-range underlying problems."

Watts means that the time for stalling and demagogic promises and good will platitudes has run out. It has come down to this: Either wipe out the conditions that produce the slums; or the slums will wipe out the cities.



## **11. THE LINK BETWEEN PEACE AND FREEDOM**

August 15, 1965

### **Civil Rights and Peace**

The young people who made "the scene" in Washington, D. C., last weekend made a down payment on a debt of honor which official Washington owes the world for the military crimes which it is committing in Vietnam.

Some 350 of the two thousand who journeyed to their nation's capital and then were brutally treated by the police and arrested for demonstrating their belief, conviction of growing millions of their fellow countrymen, that the Government has no mandate to continue its dirty war in Vietnam.

The cry for an end to the escalation of war in Vietnam which they raised in Washington on picket lines in front of the White House, in outdoor assemblies on the Mall between the Washington and Lincoln Monuments, and in a massive sitdown at the foot of Capitol Hill will echo and re-echo across the land. A genuine people's call for returning the Government to a path of reason and of opening earnest negotiations with the National Liberation Front and all intimately concerned countries, for the restoration of peace in Vietnam, was sounded there.

The assembled peace pilgrims warned that no negotiations for an end to the conflict could even be entertained until the U.S. showed good faith by ceasing its bombardment of North Vietnam and confining its soldiers to their camps until their withdrawal from the country is undertaken.

The Washington weekend for peace in Vietnam was also a demonstration of a vital and strategic development that is shaping up among the forces of social progress in our country. The Washington Assembly was another evidence of the growing merger and conscious inter-action of the fighting forces for Negro freedom, the forces of the Civil Rights Revolution and those who have been for so long advocating an end to war and cold war policies in the Government's conduct of foreign affairs.

The cause of peace has become now a major banner which the legions of Negro and white fighters for justice and equality for Negro Americans fly alongside of their civil rights standards.

Victory in the sacred and urgent struggle to end the war horror which the Government of the U.S. still stokes in Vietnam demands of all the forces for social advancement that they recognize the mutual need for a restoration of peace as the most favorable condition for social progress of all kinds.

Victory in the cause of peace requires that they combine their fight for particular needs with the universal general requirement of the fight for an end to the war in Vietnam.

As the Negro Freedom Movement has come to a recognition of this truth, so must the trade union movement come to grasp the banner of the struggle for an end to the dirty war Washington wages in Vietnam.

January 16, 1966

### **Julian Bond Against Jim Crow and Jingoism**

They rumbled and roared, they thundered and bellowed, they would have the infidel shot at sunrise or hung from the tallest telephone pole. They were the white supremacist majority of the House of Representatives of the State of Georgia "whipping-up" a lynching-bee against seating the youngest Representative-elect to that legislative body, the 25-year-old Negro youth leader—Julian Bond of Atlanta.

The instant excuse offered for the latest call from Atlanta (Ga.) for crucifying civil rights crusaders and "stop-



ping Communism" was the failure of Julian Bond to recant his principled opposition to the aggressor's role of the U.S. in Vietnam.

After a committee of the House composed a kangaroo court to review Bond's "loyalty and fitness" to occupy the seat he was elected to fill in the House, they voted 118 to 12 to bar him.

Cast amidst the hollering horde of Negro-haters and hysterical warmongers, young Julian Bond conducted himself in that Georgia Arena like a modern-day Daniel in the Lion's den. He displayed the poise and dignity, the confidence and courage which have become the signature of the fearless fighter for freedom and truth that he is.

The allegiance of Julian Bond to the struggle of his people, to strike the chains of Jim Crow tyranny and oppression from their limbs, has led him to understand the relationship of the Negro freedom cause to the endeavors of all peoples to free themselves from foreign domination and domestic reaction.

He holds to the teaching of the great Frederick Douglass that "a blow struck for freedom anywhere is an advance for freedom everywhere".

He knows that war waged by the Government of the U.S.A. against a small people in a far-distant land—Vietnam—is making a criminal of our nation in the eyes of the world, and diminishing democracy's virility at home. He knows the truth that neither Negroes nor any other Americans can be free so long as our Government engages in wars of aggression to oppress and enslave other peoples.

The nobility and heroism of young Bond is the fact that he ACTED OUT his convictions. He held to his convictions about the unjustness of U.S. intervention in Vietnam and the Dominican Republic, in the teeth of lynchers' threats on the one hand and the glittering blandishments and bribes promised if he would but recant on the other hand.

Julian Bond was elected from Atlanta's 136th Legislative District with the unprecedented landslide of 82 per cent of all the votes cast. In denying Julian Bond his rightful seat in the House, the white supremacy Georgia legislators have interposed their racist will to nullify the democratic right of suffrage of almost 200,000 Atlanta citizens. That

action of the Georgia legislature is patently unconstitutional on the face of it. It must be reversed in the courts and repudiated at the polls.

Toward this end, it is incumbent upon all who work for peace and an end to the war in Vietnam, for all who struggle alongside of the Negro people to secure equality and freedom, for all who have a concern for safeguarding and enlarging the democratic rights of all citizens to come to the aid of Julian Bond, whose fight to take his seat in the Georgia legislature is a struggle which illuminates the issue of bringing about war's end in Vietnam and in advancing the cause of Negro freedom and the nation's democracy.

January 11, 1966

### **Perilous Opportunism of Roy Wilkins and George Meany**

Roy Wilkins and George Meany are the titular heads of the largest organized expressions of the movement in their respective fields—i.e., in civil rights and in labor. One is the executive secretary of the NAACP; the other is the president of the AFL-CIO. But despite their lofty titular rank, these leading "heads" are, in a number of respects, actually the trailing tails of these powerful and objectively allied movements.

In the matter of program and ideology, particularly in the realm of foreign policy, they are indeed a serious drag on everything that is forward moving in these vital twin movements (Negro and Labor) which govern the pace of social progress in our country.

The leadership they give on questions of foreign policy can be counted upon to be backward and oftentimes utterly reactionary.

In reference to such all-encompassing questions as policies of the Government which will make for war and peace, they automatically adopt the standpoint of the Government. The world has undergone great changes since the times of Booker T. Washington<sup>1</sup> and Samuel

<sup>1</sup> Booker T. Washington (1858-1915)—a former slave, leading Negro social worker and a spokesman of the emergent petty-bourgeois and



Gompers.<sup>1</sup> In their days only a small portion of the people of the Western European countries plus the U.S.A. played an important role in the political life of the world. The masses of mankind were "removed from politics".

The masses of the few imperialist countries were largely disfranchised and the overwhelming numbers of the world's population were under the sway of tyrannical oligarchies imposed by the bayonets of the Western capitals of empire.

In those days the Gompers-Booker T. line of uncritical support to the Government's policy in foreign affairs was based on two crudely opportunistic assumptions; one, that the Government would reward their loyalty to the "powers-that-be" with concessions on the "home front", and, two, that the popular masses abroad, potentially sympathetic to labor and Negro people, were themselves too deprived and powerless to be of any real aid.

If such callous calculations found some support in the objective situation of the country and the world at the turn of the century, the world today indicts such opportunism even when using the most selfish standards of measure.

Today, for the trade union movement and the Negro freedom movement to support the Washington policies in foreign affairs as expressed in the criminal war of aggression against Vietnam and the bloody rape of the sovereign rights of the people of the Dominican Republic would be to solidarize themselves with the worst enemies of labor and the Negro people at home, and to isolate themselves from the overwhelming mass of the world's population, to divorce themselves from all the forces of social progress, democracy and socialism.

In recent pronouncements, Roy Wilkins of the NAACP and George Meany of the AFL-CIO have singled out for attack, not those who sustain the savage war against the

workers and peasants of Vietnam, but against those who demand that President Johnson act to end the war and take our troops out of that country. The crimes of the U.S. in Vietnam have left flaming villages and scarred and bleeding earth; and have stamped our national brow with the mark of Cain.

The world today is distinguished by the fact that yesterday's bonded millions are everywhere engaged in the politics of revolutionary struggle to reconstruct the order of things political, economic and social. In all countries the best of the human race is deeply engaged in the struggle to secure the end of tyranny, exploitation, racism, to open the way to a peaceful, prosperous and happy life for all mankind. As never before in the history of the world there is a spirit of solidarity which links working people and fighters for freedom of all lands and climes in ever stronger bonds of mutual aid and fraternity.

To pursue a course which lends support to the enemies of the tides of humanity in revolutionary upsurge the world over, as a stratagem for wheedling some minor temporary concession, is to isolate the Negro and Labor movements from the mainstream of history. Wilkins and Meany mislead and weaken the great organizations they head when they raise their voices in anger against the crusaders for peace and take the side of the war hawks.

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nationalistic elements amongst Negroes; advocated a course of gradual improvement in the conditions and status of Negroes in the U.S. through vocational education and minor reforms.—Ed.

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Gompers (1850-1924)—one of the founders and the first and lifelong President of the American Federation of Labor: he was a most reactionary trade union leader, an ardent champion of the policy of class collaboration and an outspoken enemy of the revolutionary and progressive movements.—Ed.



February 1966

## 12. CAPITALISM BREEDS AND FEEDS NEGRO OPPRESSION

The capitalist monopolists' domination of the country is characterized by the merciless exploitation of the working class, the ruination of the farmers and the savage oppression of the American Negro people.

Though only one-tenth of the nation's population, the Negro people supply over one-fourth of its industrial working force.

It is a mark of their special oppression that the Negro people have been bound in the main to the bottom-most rungs of the ladder of social classes. They are the most proletarian of all the peoples or ethnic groups who make up the population of the nation. About one-half of the number of white workers are engaged in occupations classified as white-collar jobs but only one-fifth of the Negroes are employed at jobs above the blue-collar<sup>1</sup> level. Less than five per cent of the Negro people can be classified in middle class and professional employees categories. Among the small capitalists there are only the barest representation of Negroes and none are to be found in the higher rungs of big capitalists and monopolists.

In the total population the farmers are a small part of the working force—about 7 per cent. This ratio also holds true in respect to the Negro people where just 8 per cent of the Negro working force are employed in various kinds of farm work.

We summarize the class composition of the 22 million Negro Americans as follows: They are 85 per cent of the

<sup>1</sup> Blue-collar refers to unskilled and semi-skilled industrial workers and service people.—Ed.

working class, 8 per cent are farmers and farm workers, 5 per cent are of the middle class, only a fraction of 1 per cent can qualify economically as capitalists. 70 per cent of the Negro people are urban.

The special racist character of the economic exploitation of the Negro people by monopoly is disclosed in the fact that Negroes are paid less than whites for equivalent work in every category of employment, from unskilled laborer to university trained professional. As the Negro Americans have been ruthlessly exploited and robbed of their rightful share in the economy, so have they been deprived of their just share of social services, educational and cultural opportunities. Racist laws, discriminatory customs, and poverty have conspired to force the mass of Negro Americans to dwell in the most depressed areas of the cities. The big city ghettos and rural slums are everywhere, North and South, the home communities of the Negro people. They are segregated parts of the larger communities which are systematically cheated of their just share of housing, parks, street care, hospitals, schools, cultural centers, etc. They are supplied only with an abundance of police by the local government authorities. The police who patrol the Negro sections and communities operate as defenders of property and the privileges of the "downtown" ruling class interest. They are committed to defense of the Establishment through subjecting the people of the slums to endless and brutal assaults upon their dignity, their lives and liberties with billy and pistol, and arbitrary acts of arrest of innocents.

The greatest indictment against the social system of the U.S. monopolists is revealed in the fact that the Negro people have been deprived of the minimal political rights associated with the Constitutional guarantees of citizens and the basic criterium of democracy and human rights. In the Southern states, even the elementary right to vote is still a cause to struggle for and not yet a universally won and exercised right of the Negro citizen. Throughout the country, South and North, Negro Americans are deprived of their rightful share of the political power, of fair representation in government from the local to the national levels. Along with the political, economic and social discrimination which express the fundamental nature of the



oppression of the Negro people in the United States, Negro Americans also are confronted on every hand with the ideological assault upon their human dignity and self-esteem by the barbarous doctrine and practices of white supremacy, of racist prejudice and chauvinist arrogance.

It is such circumstances which characterize and define the conditions of the Negro people in the nation which have given rise to the modern movement for freedom and equality of the Negro people. During the past decade especially, this movement has conducted wave after wave of heroic mass actions which has set millions of Negro Americans and white masses in motion in support of its goals. The ceaseless struggles of the Negro people has attracted the active support of ever larger sections of the rest of the nation. Furthermore, world public opinion has rallied to the cause of the Negro Americans in battle for their just rights. As a consequence, some declaratory measures have been won from the Government which affirms the justness of the Negro people's demand for an end to the discrimination system, but *the system remains* as oppressive as ever.

In the present and developing phase of the Negro people's struggle for equal rights and freedom, a new quality of emphasis must be placed on the question of the interaction and interdependence of this battle to the historic working-class obligation to lead the entire nation in struggle to break through the barrier of the capitalist social system itself. It becomes increasingly evident to the Negro freedom fighters that the real enemy is the big business dominated society which is structured to primarily serve the profit interest of the monopolists, rather than satisfy the ever-expanding needs and requirements of the masses of the people.

Lenin noted that it was necessary to be mindful of the wide range of the correlations between the movement of the oppressed and the proletarian emancipation movement of the oppressing people; to help each in turn to identify its cause and goals with that of the other. He saw the convergence and mutual reinforcement of these two movements as essential for the victory of either. This concept has special validity for our time and the struggle in our country; emphatically so, when we give consideration to

the overwhelming working-class composition of the Negro people.

In the period ahead the Negro freedom movement will increasingly develop a consciousness of the objective fact that *the struggle for Negro equality and freedom is a specialized part of the working-class struggle*; that ultimately the Negroes' oppressive condition is perpetuated by the capitalist-monopolist class which is able to gain additional profit advantage from the super-exploitation of Negroes as a consequence of their deprivation of equal rights.

More and more clearly the Negro freedom movement will draw anti-monopolist, anti-capitalist conclusions from its struggle experiences. The heavy proportion of working people to the total Negro population dictates such a course of development for the Negro freedom movement.

What is more, capitalism in the U.S. has historically victimized the Negro American, even as capitalist-imperialism victimized his ancestral kinsmen of the African continent.

From its earliest establishment in America, capitalism has been guilty of enriching its private fortunes out of the most savage robbery of the Negro people and the most ruthless exploitation of the labor power of Negro working people, both, during the era of chattle slavery, and throughout the span of the century since emancipation.

Capitalism instituted the dreadful system of human slavery to translate "the blood, toil and tears" of Negroes into personal profit and corporate capital and maintained it by terror and law and savage racist social customs for over 300 years.

The operation of the slave system in the U.S.A. *then*, like the discrimination system against Negroes *now*, were developments of capitalism and functions of this nefarious system of human exploitation for private profit-making.

Notwithstanding all the disabilities and oppression—the excluding and the denial, the segregation and the discrimination—the Negro people are an integral part of this American nation.

*The Negro is an American and this United States is his native land.*

Other than the Indians, all Americans have ancestral origins abroad, Negro Americans' ancestors stemmed from



Africa, from peoples who today are playing a great role in the world cause of emancipation from the bondage of colonialism and imperialism.

The struggle of the Negro people for integration in the economic, political and social affairs of the nation on the basis of full equality with all other Americans *is a struggle to enlarge democracy in the entire nation.*

Negro Americans of all classes are compelled to enter into the struggle against racial discrimination and its social consequences. However, the fact that the Negro people are predominantly working class will increasingly influence the program and goals of the Negro people's movement, the strategy and tactics of the struggle, as well as assuring the permanent nature of the alliance with the organized labor movement. Indeed, labor and the Negro people are destined to march together in pursuit of a common future free of capitalist exploitation and capitalist racial oppression.

Because of the high working-class composition of the Negro people and the strength of the Negro workers in key areas of the economy, *the freedom struggle of the Negro people presents itself as a vital front of the anti-monopoly struggle.* It is geared into the tasks related to the fulfillment of the historic goal of the working class, that is, to effect the transformation of society from capitalist to socialist. The freedom objectives of the Negro people directly benefit the working class and serve the democratic interest of the whole nation.

The Negro people's fight to eliminate political discrimination is in essence **A STRUGGLE FOR GENUINELY REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT.**

It entails full freedom to vote and to be voted for. The majority must be secure to exercise its *right to the power* in local political subdivisions—precincts, wards, counties, Congressional Districts, Assembly Districts, etc. The minority must have the right to *its just share of the power*, to proportional representation, at all levels of the three branches of government—the legislative, administrative and judicial, as well as an equal share of the police authority.

The struggle of the Negro people for full access to the political arena in the Southern states and the Northern

ghettos is a struggle to oust the worst reactionaries, Dixiecrats, racists, warmongers, anti-labor servants of the monopolists from Congress and from the state and local governing bodies, and to place in public office genuine representatives of the people chosen by and from the Negro people, the labor movement and the progressive forces generally.

The struggle of the Negro people against economic discrimination is a major front in the real **WAR AGAINST POVERTY.**

It requires the trade union organization of the unorganized, especially in the factories and the fields of the South.

It necessitates the development of the economy in the South in particular and in the other areas of blight and poverty as well. The reconstruction of agriculture on a modern scientific basis and big expansion of industry in the Southern region is needed.

The economic needs of the Negro people require a vast and country-wide program to wipe out the shame of the slums of the metropolitan centers and rural areas and to erect in their stead unsegregated, open-occupancy controlled low-rent and low-cost housing, recreational facilities and playgrounds and parks, as well as all necessary schools and hospital facilities.

Capital for the financing of such development programs which are needed to reduce the accumulated discrimination gap in the economic status of the Negro people must be supplied by the Government out of the profit hoards of the monopolists and from the savings that would flow from a drastic reduction of the military appropriations.

To secure the scale of an anti-poverty program needed to wipe out the economic discrimination and social deprivation of Negro Americans is to make an assault upon the profit grabbing of the corporations and the trusts, is to enter into struggle against the economic and political pillars of monopoly capitalism itself.

Central to the solution of all problems that present themselves in the area of strategy and tactics for the Negro freedom movement is the necessity to identify the Negro people in terms of 1) their relation to the nation as a whole, and 2) their relation to the working class (whose destiny it is to lead the nation to its classless future).



In this regard—

- 1) Negroes are an integral part of the nation, though suffering special oppression and racial discrimination.
- 2) The number of Negro capitalists are minimal and none are big capitalists; the middle class category are a small percentage of the total; the *mass* of the Negro people are of the working class.

The approach to all policy questions, to all matters of the tactics and strategy in respect to the developing struggles of the Negro freedom movement must take into account the necessity that all policies and tactics need to correspond to both the immediate as well as long-range interest of *the basic numbers* of the Negro people, that is, to its working-class majority.

During the past decade the young generation, especially, of the Negro people have gained a wide-experience with the CLASS nature of the capitalist STATE and how its police and court system defends its privilege and power. They have gained much experience in the matter of building organization, cultivating unity, reaching out to forge alliances with wide strata of white people. They have, out of their experience, grown profoundly critical of the whole nature and structure of capitalist society. They seek a progressive alternative to capitalism. Now, as at no other time in its history, the Communist Party of the U.S.A. has the opportunity and duty to disclose the socialist alternative to the young generation, to bring to the Negro militants the science of Marxism-Leninism to help illumine the way to lasting victory for the masses in the struggle for freedom, equality and justice.